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TESIS DOCTORAL

Emotions, protests, and populism: discursive struggle and democratic implications of recent anti-austerity movements

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ABSTRACT

Over the last decades, social scientists and democratic theorists have paid increased attention to the role of emotions in politics. However, while sociologists have emphasised primarily the role of emotions in the mobilization process, and normative political theorists have discussed mainly on the dichotomy between suitable *versus* harmful emotions for democratic purposes, there is still a lacuna in the understanding of the political role of emotions. It is this gap that this thesis attempts to fill.

Focusing on the broad role of emotions apparent in recent anti-austerity movements in Europe, this thesis advances a theoretical inquiry, which can contribute to the connection between protest analysis, democratic theory, and populism. While in the broad scientific literature recent protest mobilizations have generally been associated with contentious processes, the rise of left-wing populism, practices of deliberative democracy, experiments in horizontal decision-making, and so forth, this research highlights the role of affects in recent anti-austerity movements, and examines how a discursive focus on emotions can enrich the scholarship on democratic theory on offer. The main argument proposed here is that, besides their central function in motivating people to engage in political action, emotions also play a significant role in the framing of democratic order. Specifically, it is contended that they have a '*geometrical*' role in shaping the political subject – namely 'the people'. As well, contributing to the latency of political concepts, they have an '*evocative*' role in today's struggle for democratic legitimacy and popular sovereignty. Finally, this investigation assesses the success of some current theories of democracy giving an account of the role of emotions in politics, and argues that an *agonistic* approach offers fruitful insights in this debate.

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GJM: Global Justice Movements

DRY: Democracia Real Ya

15-M: 15th of May movements

OWS: Occupy Wall Street

NSM: New Social Movements

Chapter 1. Protests, emotions and democracy: Setting up the problem

1. The people's wrath

2011 has been defined as the year of global indignation. In the wake of the Arab Spring, phenomena such as the *Indignados* and *Occupy Wall Street* were paradigmatic of a global wave of mobilizations that had deep political consequences. Syntagma square in Athens, Puerta del Sol in Madrid, Zuccotti Park in New York are some of the places in which the citizens protested and destabilised the political agenda. As a result of the global financial crisis, these protest movements emerged – first in Europe and the United States, and in a second moment in a global scale – as critical manifestations of the political and economic state-of-affairs, claiming more citizen participation in the political decision process. Despite the differences and peculiarities of each of these protests, the shared aim of these phenomena was to be a vector of political and social change: they all demanded for more (direct and participatory) democracy, lacking of faith in traditional political processes and official actors.

Obviously protests and social movements are not new phenomena, but have characterized the major changes in contemporary political systems, and will certainly remain protagonists in the future. Nor are the social movements that later become institutionalised political parties. However, this recent wave of mobilizations has reawakened scientific interest in social movements and protest. The emergence of recent anti-austerity and protest movements caught the scientific attention in recent years, and a lot of ink has already been

spilled on these movements. Since the new wave of protest movements attained a global dimension in 2011, academics and activists have focused on their demands and their political implications. Social scientists have analysed these phenomena, highlighting the broad political implications for contemporary democracies (as well as other types of political regimes, especially in the case of the Arab Spring), and especially the disaffection towards political institutions and the financial system they reflect. Similarly, scientists have put a lot of emphasis on the new political parties that have emerged from the experience of the 2011 protest movements, and that have started competing in local and general elections, especially in Southern Europe.

A heterogeneous mix of approaches and perspectives developed in recent years attempt to answer a series of questions referred to these contentious phenomena. Certain questions have gained much attention in scholarly debate: how to address the anti-austerity movements? What about the relationship between movements and new media technologies? Should it be considered as a global phenomenon, or as plural and differentiated experiences? And in a more theoretical vein, what kind of political vision do they entail? Is it an ephemeral, isolated occurrence or does it belong to the long wave of global – though locally grounded – anti-capitalistic and radical democracy protests? What are the relationships between these movements and the institutionalized political parties?

Within this context, a concrete sector of social sciences – mainly sociology of protest, and protest event analysis – has produced a copious amount of literature, particularly focusing on topics such as the organizational resources and networks these movements employ to mobilise citizens, the type of mobilizations, and the inner structure of movements (e.g. Benski, 2013; Jasper, 2011). Moreover, in consonance with the spreading of protest, scholars have also pointed out, among other things, the anti-austerity discourses and

the struggle against economic inequalities and the growing precariat (Tejerina et al. 2013; Standing, 2011), the relationships between movements and democratic theory and practices (della Porta, 2009; 2013), the rise of (left-wing) populism in Europe (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, 2014; Urbinati, 2014), and the central critique of representation (Tormey 2012; Prentoulis and Thomassen, 2013). It is worth noting, in this sense, the fact that the protesters occupying squares and streets in the anti-austerity manifestations did not just act against the financial system, nor merely criticize the current representative democracy as profoundly corrupt, but also experimented with different models of democracy. Indeed, as we will point out in the following chapters, great part of the defenders of deliberative democracy found concrete examples to ground their theories in the political reality (e.g. della Porta, 2009).

These are only some of the topics related to the increasing literature that focuses on these recent phenomena. However, the focal point of this investigation, although strongly related to these kinds of questions, is not developed from the same angle. Rather, this research deals with a parallel aspect that these movements uncover, which is the role of emotions in politics.

In an analogous way to the growing literature concerning the organizational structures of movements, and the 'traditional' questions about democratic problems – such as deliberation, representation and institutional schemes – increasing attention has been lately paid to the emotional dimension these movements involve. Emotions and politics, we should acknowledge, are not new concerns. Politics is awash with emotions: fear, anger, guilt, pity, envy, shame, among other feelings that play a part in the lives of every common citizen, in the formation of social movements, in the political parties' strategy and so forth. In this sense, the political reflection about emotions, it must be said, is nothing new as we will show in the following chapters, the political role of emotions deepens its roots in classical and modern traditions of

thought. It is noteworthy that, however, while central to many aspects of politics and social processes, emotions have only recently re-entered into social science investigations, as if emotions were somehow banned from the mainstream political science for decades. Drawing on different critical approaches and traditions of thought, the relatively new 'affective turn' (e.g. Greco and Stenner, 2008; Clough and Halley, 2007; Clough, 2008) has developed a vast cross-disciplinary literature on emotions that opens up thought-provoking interrogatives about the relationship between affective and political dimensions. Research questions have included, among other themes, inquiries about the relationship between reason and emotion, the place of emotions in the process of political judgment, deliberation, and the role of affects in the rise and development of protest and social movements, and so forth. Furthermore, while recent studies on emotions disclose and sustain their growing centrality in every kind of political process (e.g. Hall, 2005; Krause, 2008; Morrell, 2010; Kingston, 2011), it is worth noting that the attention has recently increased alongside the growth of recent anti-austerity mobilizations, as well as the electoral success of right-wing parties across Europe. (e.g. Perugorría and Tejerina, 2013; Wodak *et. al.*, 2013).

Drawing special attention to states of feeling that mobilize, or demobilize citizenries, many authors have started addressing theoretical and normative questions about the role of emotions in protest events and, more broadly, in democratic regimes. Within this context, social sciences have mainly focused on the role of emotions in the mobilization process and, on the other hand, on the dichotomy between suitable *versus* harmful democratic emotions. In fact, on the one hand scholars have made the effort to bring emotional dynamics into the explanation of collective action and social movements, considering emotions in movements' emergence, organization, identity, framing, repertoires, etc. (Jasper, 2011). On the other hand, political theorists have explored the normative question of where one draws the line between good and suitable *versus* bad and harmful emotions for democratic purposes. On a

general note, these questions have focused on what kind of emotional engagement liberal and democratic regimes need: what affective dispositions (if any) does liberal democracy require from citizenry? How to differentiate emotions that fit with democracy and those that are not beneficial to liberal and democratic values? (e.g. Hall, 2005; Krause, 2008; Morrell, 2010).

"Listen to the people's wrath". This was one of the numerous slogan shouted by young people in Puerta del Sol in Madrid in the spring of 2011 (Ramonet, 2011: 4). How is this slogan to be interpreted? What is the role of wrath – the wrath of people – in politics? Referring to the recent wave of anti-austerity mobilizations**,** Zygmunt Bauman observed that the 2011 protest movement known as the *Indignados* was an 'emotional' mobilization[1], stating that emotions are particularly suitable for the destructive task, but they are useless for constructive functions. On a similar note, Charles Taylor opens his foreword to Rebecca Kingston and Leonard Ferry's work, *Bringing Passion Back in: the Emotions in Political Philosophy* (2008), with a forthright statement: "The idea that democracy is threatened by passion is strange but, in a sense, true" (2008, vii). Is the people's wrath threatening democracy? Is wrath the only emotion manifestly expressed by these movements? What about other emotions brought to the forefront by the recent wave of anti-austerity movements, such as indignation, resentment, humiliation, fear, hope, joy, and so forth?

The normative question about the fit between certain emotional dispositions and democratic principles has certainly a significant theoretical value, and recently a growing amount of literature has focused on this subject. Beyond the alleged 'hostile' value of wrath for democracy, what protest movements

[1] Interview by Vicente Verdú, *El País*, 17 October 2011. In the original Spanish: "si la emoción es apta para destruir resulta especialmente inepta para construir nada […] La emoción es inestable e inapropiada para configurar nada coherente y duradero […] [El movimiento crece y crece pero] lo hace a través de la emoción, le falta pensamiento. Con emociones solo, sin pensamiento, no se llega a ninguna parte".

surely do is to allow for an in-depth analysis of the relationship between emotions and politics. Within this context, this research starts with the assumption that there is a theoretical and political dispute about the function of emotions in politics and, more concretely, in democratic practices. Although it has been shown that emotions have been cast off by contemporary liberal political theory on the grounds that they represent a danger to reasoned debate (Hall, 2002; 2005; Mouffe, 2002), still, many contemporary authors working within democratic theory recognise that an emotional commitment is required for a truly democratic community (e.g. Ferry and Kingston, 2008: 14; Kingston, 2011; Krause, 2008, Morrell, 2010). Furthermore, the development of contentious events during the last years as well as the emergence of new political subjects across Europe adds significant political problems to the relationship between emotions and politics (and the study of it). Hence, if this research deals with a general puzzle – what is the role of emotions in democratic politics, and how to theoretically and politically deal with it? –, some concrete questions derive from our methodological standpoint, which consists, as we will develop further on this pages, in linking the normative questions about emotions to the theoretical and discursive analysis of the recent wave of anti-austerity mobilizations that have characterized the European context particularly since 2011.

2. Object of study and research questions

Given this context, and with the aim of maximizing clarity and precision in the analysis, it is necessary to delve into the object of study. Investigating the role of emotions in democratic politics implies specifying the boundaries of the study itself.

First of all, it has to be clear that focusing on recent anti-austerity movements does not mean that this is a thesis on the *Indignados*, or similar movements, as

such. Rather, it is a thesis that starts with these phenomena originated in the 2011 in order to enter into the democratic implications they entail. Specifically, the object of our research will be a critically engagement with the broad literature that has lately focused on the political role of emotions. Concretely, assessing the role of emotions in scholarly debates about democracy and populism, we aim at vindicating the cogency of some theoretical reflections, which can in turn shed light on the same contentious phenomena. Hence, we will mainly draw on the considerations that disclose the nature of the relationship between emotions and the political realm. Particularly, we will put emphasis on a series of political approaches – from different scientific fields, such as social movement studies, populism and democratic theory – that suggest thought-provoking understanding of this relationship and unveil normative and theoretical consequences for the political domain.

Secondly, when dealing with such broad and all-encompassing terms and perspectives – democracy, democratic theories, populism, emotions, etc. – an operation of clear terminological definition seems necessary. However, as we will argue, the emotions intervene directly in the framing of political reality and in conceptual definition itself. That means that the terminological definition is what is often at stake, as result of the interplay between the emotional dynamics and the political realm. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy to mention here some clarifying – though preliminary – points. As almost all political categories, the concepts of democracy and populism are contested, and there is an ongoing animated debate around both of them. Democratic theory is in this sense the lively manifestation of the struggle over what democracy is and should be. Although a minimum agreement seems to be reached around the notions of a combination of popular sovereignty and majority rule – which involves the existence of free and fair elections, the protection of minority rights, equality before the law, and respect for basic human rights – different approaches, vision, and 'models' of democracy have

been suggested in both empirical political science and normative political thinking. Analogously, the term populism encompasses many different understandings, and despite the scientific attempts to reach a consensual definition, political studies have on the contrary opened up the field of usages, which range from demagoguery, particular kind of movements or political style and discourse (e.g. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Müller, 2011). In the specific subsequent chapters, which are dedicated to these theoretical problems, we will further delve into their conceptual significance.

Thirdly, a consideration about the emotions must appear in this introduction. Although emotions as such are not the 'pure' object of our research, they occupy a central role throughout the argument of this thesis, and they will be therefore the specific object of analysis in subsequent chapters. What counts for now is to highlight that political science has an uneasy relationship with the presence and functions of emotions within political realm – probably due to its own historical development as a social science. As we have already mentioned and will further explain in the second chapter, in recent years a wide range of disciplines took up the task of giving new prominence to the role of emotions within social sciences. Neurology, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and historical studies, among others, contributed to expand the interest for emotional dynamics, also reaching political studies. While emotions have been given little place in most social-scientific theories for a long time, being considered too personal, or too irrational to be modelled or measured properly, recently a variegated chorus of researchers brooked the silence (e.g. Damasio 1994; Elster 1999; Forgas, 2000; Goodwin et al., 2001; Kingston, 2008; 2011; de Sousa, 1987). This diverse literature has challenged the traditional dichotomy between reason and passion, re-locating the affective dimension at the core of social and political realm, with special emphasis on what concerns political mobilizations: emotions are directly related to the spreading of protest movements (Goodwin et al., 2001; Goodwin and Jasper, 2003); they have a distinct social character and a specific weight in

the formation of collective identities and social bonds (Ahmed, 2004); they play a role in the process of making political and moral judgment (Nussbaum, 1994), and so forth.

A variegated literature has brought emotions back into the discussion. This is certainly a merit we must acknowledge. Yet, despite this flurry of unceasing research, one may still experience dissatisfaction. Firstly because it seems that social movement researchers and democratic theorists hardly bridge their heterogeneous analyses (even though this might be a general trend within the different paradigms of social sciences). Secondly, because there still seems to be unexplored questions in the understanding of the political role of emotions. A lacuna this thesis attempts to fill.

In this sense it is necessary to mention some gaps in this literature. First, only few authors within this literature explicitly bridge the theoretical and epistemological perspectives. Although many scholars put emphasis on the epistemological consequences this 'affective turn' has brought about, little has been done to connect the different views with broader theoretical and historical considerations (e.g. Kingston & Ferry, 2008: 108-125, Krause, 2008; Solomon, 1990; 1993). As we have argued elsewhere (Cossarini, 2014), a *longue durée* perspective mixing a history of political thought and contemporary debates can shed light on the relationship between emotions and reason, and therefore provide broader analytical tolls to the understanding of contentious phenomena. However, given the limitation of space and the scope of this research, the development of this point will be limited to the methodological chapter. At this stage, it is worth noting that the traditional dichotomy between reason and emotion is still profoundly pervasive, and probably represents an intrinsic feature of contemporary political studies.

The second point that has to be highlighted is that, within political and democratic theory, 'reason' – and its correlate terms, such as rational, reasonable, and the 'best argument' in deliberative theory – has traditionally been given a privileged, often overvalued, place. This does not mean that the objective of our research is to conversely give predominance to the emotional dimension. Rather, it means that it has been proven that within democratic theory, contemporary scholars have traditionally given great place to reason, perpetuating (consciously or not) the dichotomy between reason and passions, and excluding (often deliberatively) great part of the emotional dimension from the proper political field (e.g. Holmes, 1995; Hall, 2005). Within this context, recent contentious phenomena, along with developments in theoretical perspectives and new cross-methodologies suggest that it is possible to explore the role of emotions from a different angle. In this line, the theoretical question that guides us in our research is: what can a focus on emotions bring to democratic theory? The wide and elusive nature of this question obviously involves other related questions we should and will consider in this investigation. These questions include interrogating the relationship between rational and emotional factors in the epistemology of political research, as well as interrogating the same meaning of sweeping and contested terms such as emotions and democracy, among others.

Additionally, it is evident that this research question can give birth to multiple studies, depending on the perspective, the methods and the object of investigation. Theoretical, historical, or empirical inquiries can enrich the understanding of emotions in the political domain, as well as in the process of democratic legitimacy. However, our level of analysis, as we will detail further on in this introduction, lies at the crossroads between democratic theory, populist and protest movement studies. It implies that, in order to effectively study and to give form to our investigation, a focus on a case study is warranted.

Moreover, grounding the theories we will take into account on a case study, or more precisely, assuming the case study as our starting point signifies that its boundaries must be detailed. In this sense, we will put emphasis on the way in which emotions were at play at the discursive level in the recent anti-austerity events – with a special focus on the Spanish case. Needless to say that this thesis is not interested in giving any historical or sociological explanation, nor finding a casual mechanism of these events. They are only partially our objects of study, being mostly the concrete reality where to ground and probe political theories. As we will show, for the purpose of this research, focusing on some concrete events has a double scientific advantage: it can obviously shed light on the same contentious phenomena taken into account, and it can consequently probe the content and inconsistencies of democratic and political theories we draw on, and therefore test their cogency of the existing political reality. In this sense, we will delve more into it in the specific chapter dedicated to the discourse analysis of the last wave of mobilization and protests in Spain, so that little attention will be given to a detailed presentation of these phenomena. At this stage it can be said that we will mainly focus on the discursive level of these phenomena, putting particular emphasis on some key slogan, and mottos, that protesters have been employing during their acts.

One last specification about the object has to do with our methodological approach, which will be the centre of attention of the next paragraph. It is the same nature of the object of the research that needs a combination of perspectives, and a cross-methodological analysis. Through the conjunction of theoretical and discursive inquiries – this is our belief – the role of emotions in democratic politics can be further comprehended.

Given that the conundrum we face is the place and role of emotions within the political realm, and given the case study we will take into account, we concretely deal with a series of specific questions.

- From a theoretical point of view, this research focuses on the possibility of combining different fields of research, such as protest analysis and populist and democratic theory. Concretely, this investigation asks: what can a discursive focus on emotion bring to theories of democracy? And conversely, to what extent theories of democracy have to take into account the role of emotions?

- Empirically, the question we want to answer is related to the role emotions have in the complex process of framing the political realm. How do they work in framing the reality? How do they take part in the discursive struggle over the meaning of democracy and in the process of democratic legitimacy?

It is undoubtedly true that a lot of investigations have been focusing on the role of emotions in contentious practices, in protests, in democratic deliberation, and political agonism (e.g. Goodwin and Jasper, 2003; Krause, 2008; Kingston & Ferry, 2008; Mouffe, 2013). One might argue indeed that the role of emotions has been analysed within social movements and especially as part of the mobilization process, the organizational resources and networks. As well, it might be contended that even in the dominant theories of justices and deliberative democracy of 20th century, there was an acknowledgement of the emotional underpinning, such as the intrinsic desire for justice as its own normative basis (e.g. Banerjee and Bercuson, 2015).

However, these scientific traditions have not phrased their research in the way we are picturing this thesis, and these questions have not been explored in much depth. A lacuna still exists in the combination of these heterogeneous studies: the connection between, on the one hand, theories of democracy and populism and, on the other hand, the focus of emotions brought back particularly by social movements studies has not received much attention

amongst scholars. In this sense, this study tries to develop a relatively novel research line, combining these research approaches and theories.

3. Methods and hypotheses

As we have shown, a heterogeneous corpus of recent literature brought the role of emotions back to political debate. Psychological, epistemological, historical, normative, and sociological perspectives have been used by scholars in order to grasp the political function of emotional dynamics. This research cannot properly assess the analysis without recognizing the merits of this mix of disciplines. However, the perspective chosen for our inquiry, despite being cross-methodological, is clearly defined within the contours of certain fields of study. As we have already stated, the focus of this study will be scholarly debates on theories of democracy and populism, and particularly their emphasis on the affective dimensions of politics. The aim is to vindicate the cogency of some theoretical reflections, which can in turn shed light on the same contentious phenomena**.** In this sense, this thesis is mainly a theory-oriented investigation that starts with and operates via a discursive analysis. Methodologically, we face the problem of operating in between different approaches and fields of study. It implies that different traditions of thought are employed at the epistemological and theoretical level. It will become clear therefore that this research is not a purely analytical inquiry that draws on only one corpus of theories, trying to highlight its arguments, inconsistencies, critical arguments, etc. Rather, drawing on different fields of political studies we want to critically engage with a political problem. Grounding the theories on concrete reality, the aim is to bridge theory and empirical evidence, debates on democracy and debates on social movements. The idea is that these perspectives have something to learn from each other, and their linkage helps to somehow develop an original research line. In this sense, while we will probe the cogency of normative democratic theories, it will in turn supply

further theoretical tools for the understanding of the same contentious phenomena taken into account.

THEORY → CASE STUDY ←→ THEORY

Figure 1.1 Link between theory and case study.

We will focus in detail about this methodological approach in the core epistemological chapter, but it is now important to bear in mind what the combination of these two perspectives means. John Dryzek, Bonnie Honig and Anne Phillips, in their 'Introduction' to *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory* **(**2006: 5) affirm that political theory is located "somewhere between the distanced universals of normative philosophy and the empirical world of politics". If we agree with this statement, we then should acknowledge that the connection between normative philosophy and empirical world is made by language and discourses. As John Dryzek suggests, "discourse is a shared way of apprehending the world", which "enables those who subscribe to it to interpret bits of information and put them together into coherent stories or accounts" (Dryzek 1997: 8). In other words, it is in and through discourses that political theory develops itself and can comprehend political phenomena, elaborate concepts, and perpetuate ideas. At the same time, as the critical tradition of discourse analyses has shown (e.g. Laclau and Mouffe, 1985), ideas and concepts are daily involved in discursive struggles for the meaning. In this sense, while natural, physical and cultural objects clearly 'exist' independently of any particular discourse, they are 'discursively constructed', which means that their significance is constantly transformed through concrete discursive articulations.

In this sense, we will specifically underline the role of emotions in their discursive translations. We will specifically draw on discourse and frame analysis, as well as rely on the theoretical outcomes of social movement

studies, two of the recent multidisciplinary research fields that have developed fascinating approaches and methods for the analysis of emotions and politics. Within these scientific fields, as we will show in the epistemological and methodological chapter, emotions are seen to have some essential and intrinsic dimensions: *cognitive, evaluative, sensitive,* and *motivational*. Given these allegations, we argue that a combination of discourse analysis and democratic and populist theory represents a fruitful way in the comprehension of the role of emotions in politics. As well, we will enquiry whether a discursive focus on emotions can enhance democratic theory itself. This inter-methodological nature is indeed one of the defining elements of this research.

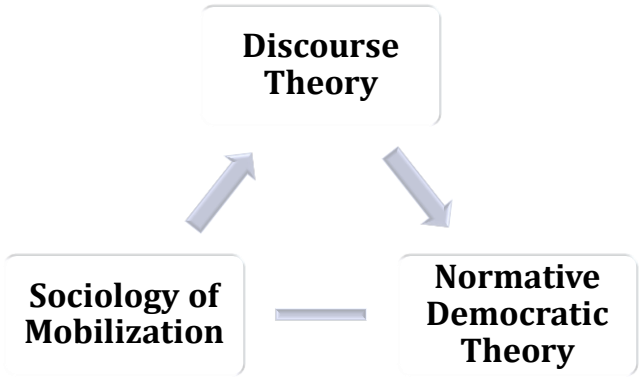

Figure 1.2 Link between different theoretical approaches.

Going beyond the pure normative perspective – generally employed by scholars operating within the liberal paradigms – this conjunction opens up fascinating ways of analysis that can complement both theoretical and empirical investigations. In our view, this should increase the interest in this research, bringing nonetheless some difficulties. First, broadening our descriptive and analytical tools obliges us to fulfil the theoretical standards of different methodologies. Secondly, employing different methodologies increase the risk to open the field and the object of analysis in an

unmanageable way.

Nevertheless, this research will draw particularly on theoretical consideration about the nature of populism, its relationship with democracy and discourse analysis of recent anti-austerity movements, in order to assess some general, testable hypotheses. Moreover, our hypotheses, as we will show, derive from a critical review of recent literature on emotions and politics. This heterogeneous literature, as we will see in the subsequent chapters, suggests, among other things, that (1) emotional factors are essential in both collective mobilization, as well as in the creation of social bonds. As well, from a theoretical and epistemological point of view, recent scholarship argues that (2) modern dichotomies based on division between rational/irrational dimensions, although highly pervasive in political studies, have to be revisited.

These premises allow us to formulate some hypothesis about the potentiality of a discursive focus on emotions for theories of democracy and populism. Specifically, considering the discursive level of analysis, we can articulate some considerations about the role of emotions in the process of framing the political realm. In this sense, it is contended that:

- Emotions have a '*geometrical*' role in shaping political subjects. From a purely theoretical point of view, one may find demonstration of this *geometrical* role of emotions within the history of political thought, being they concrete part of political theories – often opposed to 'reason' – and their intent to create legitimized political order (Holmes, 1995: 271). This thesis starts with the assumption that emotions have a broad historical and theoretical role in the construction of the political order. It stresses that they have a role in the current struggle for the meaning of political categories and, as a result, protest movements are part of this struggle. At the discursive level, our hypothesis is that emotions operate in the formation of political identities, creation of basic

democratic bounds, and consolidation of democratic beliefs. Specifically, we think that emotions function through a discursive construction capable of dividing the social into two camps, and giving birth to political identities. As shown by the literature on populism, this logic often means the division between 'the people' and the establishment (Laclau, 2005a: 110).

- Furthermore, we contend that emotions have an '*evocative*' role, contributing to the latency and ideality of political concepts. Emotional factors take part, through the ideological and symbolical function of the concepts they contribute to create, to the constantly transformation of political ideas. Discursively, emotions operate in the daily struggle over the definition of central political categories, such as the political subject – 'the people' – and therefore the same idea of 'democracy'. Such concepts are publically contested and continuously redefined – this is what contentious phenomena, also emotionally, show and claim.

In this context, it will be stressed that a discursive approach to emotions can contribute to the normative debate about the relationship between populism and democracy.

- For these reasons, we will argue that a discursive focus on emotions enhances democratic theory, insofar as it opens up a space for theoretical reflections that goes beyond the purely normative dichotomy between good and suitable *versus* bad and harmful emotional dispositions for democratic purposes. In this vein, a theoretical and discursive focus on emotions can also contribute to the normative debate on the relationship between democracy and populism – often formulated in a similar either/or fashion. Focusing on emotions adds interesting nuances to the normative debate about the

threatening or *correcting* nature of populism for democracy, since it shows the articulated ways in which the struggle for conceptual meaning occurs.

In this light, we further highlight the relevance of our case studies – the recent wave of anti-austerity movements. They represent one of the most remarkable examples of the role of emotions in politics, both at the discursive and theoretical level. As well, they are an expression of the broad and foundational role of emotions in politics, notably for what concerns the use of emotional tools in the creation of political and democratic subjects, as well as for the emotional struggle for the meaning of key political categories.

4. Aim and structure of the research

As we have already mentioned, particularly engaging with the scholarly debates on democracy and populism, our purpose is to delve into theoretical reflections that are attentive to emotional dimensions. Specifically, the idea is to explore the role of emotions in the process of democratic legitimacy, drawing on the case of the recent wave of anti-austerity movements, and their rhetoric for popular sovereignty. In so doing, we will also disclose how a discursive focus on emotions can enhance democratic theory.

In order to reach this objective, the concrete case study allows us to deepen into theoretical considerations. In this sense, we construct an investigation placed at the crossroad between different methodologies of political investigation. Theoretical and discursive aspects are showed to be intertwined and not merely in a parallel way, so that they can be put together with the aim of constructing a comprehensive narrative on our object of study, which is – as stated above – a relevant theoretical and political problem to delve into. Trying to conduct an exhaustive analysis of the topic studied, the aim is, in

other words, to better understand the function of emotions in the fluctuating and shifting boundaries of democratic legitimacy, as well as to theoretically vindicate a particular democratic perspective. In order to do so, we will follow a quadruple strategy:

a) We will explore how political and social theory has considered the role of emotions and their relationship with the political domain. Through an analysis of recent literature, we will put emphasis on the heterogeneous fields of contemporary political research on emotions. Highlighting the different arguments within the literature, we will put special accent on the broad political consequences associated to social theorizing.

b) We will further develop the epistemological considerations about the nature of political investigations. As well, we will set our theoretical and methodological model for the study, which will enable us to link together heterogeneous and apparently separated fields of study, such as the political analysis of emotions and theories of populism and democracy.

c) We will focus on our case study – the case of recent anti-austerity mobilizations and particularly the Spanish case –, and through a discourse analysis we will identify the role of emotions and affective dimensions.

d) We will return to a theory-centred section, delving into recent populist and democratic theories. If the aim is to vindicate the cogency of some theoretical reflections, nonetheless the normative question will be linked to the discursive focus on emotion we will have developed in the previous chapters.

In accordance with this, we will proceed through different steps. The structure of this research is, indeed, deliberately intended at developing in a clear manner its main methodological objective, which is the conjunction of both normative democratic theory and discourse analysis. Drawing on a heterogeneous literature about social movements, populism and the theory of democracy, the research aims at showing a theoretical path to the comprehension of the political role of emotional dimensions, specifically referring to recent contentious mobilizations.

From this perspective, the chapters can be seen as divided in three main blocks: literature review, methodology, and development of theoretical and discursive analyses. More concretely, the second chapter (Chapter 2) is dedicated to a critical examination of the relationship between emotions and political research. After dealing with the conceptual analysis of emotions and affective dimensions, particular attention will be paid to the relationship between emotion and reason in modern and contemporary political investigation. Moreover, we will put emphasis on the arguments developed by contemporary political research on emotions, especially highlighting the different arguments within normative social and political theory. The following chapter (Chapter 3) belongs to the second block. This is the core methodological and epistemological part of our research. In fact, we firstly deal with the epistemological consequences that the literature on emotions and politics bring to the forefront. Then we take a stand and advance some suggestions for the combination of different methodologies, showing the advantages of this move. A conjunction of theoretical and discursive perspectives, it is argued, will allow a better comprehension of our puzzle. Moreover, drawing on the discursive approach developed by the so-called Essex School, we will particularly delve into some consideration of the discursive level of our investigation and its link with populism and normative thinking. Drawing on this perspective of populism, we will explore the place of emotions within it. It is through the populist logic, it is contended, that

emotions operate what we have called their *geometrical* function. Populism, in other words, activate a politicization of passions.

The following two chapters combine discourse analysis with theoretical reflection about social movements. Chapter four (Chapter 4) is focused on the ways in which the social sciences have considered collective action, and its particular relationship with the dichotomy between reason/emotion. It is firstly devoted to a review of the developing field of protest movement studies, and draws deeply on recent scholarship on protest and social movements. The attention is on both the explanation of collective action and social mobilization, as well as on the ways in which emotions have been included in the comprehension of social movements. In the following chapter (Chapter 5) we will pay particular attention to the emotional elements we can find discursively employed within the contentious phenomena we take into account. We will put emphasis on the political consequences of this, showing that emotional dynamics properly interplay with the same definition of political ideas, such as 'the people' and 'democracy', which are at the centre of the discursive and emotional struggle. Finally, the last two chapters (Chapter 6 and 7) go back to a theoretical perspective, resuming the normative questions about the relationship between democratic politics and the role of emotions. Concretely, the sixth chapter is devoted to the uneasy relationship between populism and democracy. The literature on democracy and populism is so vast that any attempt at completeness would be futile. Nonetheless, dealing with recent perspectives that highlight the problematic nature of populism for liberal democracy, the chapter considers the deep theoretical and historical magnitude of such issue, and intends on making a contribution via a discursive approach to emotions. Consequently, the seventh chapter discusses some normative political theories that have developed recently with a strong interest in the role of emotions in democratic interaction, and argues that an *agonistic* approach can be a fruitful perspective to deal with this debate.

5. Advantages and limitations of the research

In introducing the main lines of our research, it is important to make clear that we have also found a number of obstacles. We believe that it is essential to explicitly refer to them, as well as to refer to the intrinsic limitations of the investigation. Openly discussing them is somehow a way to overcome their implications.

The first difficulty has been dealing with the wide and sweeping definitions of political concepts this research focuses on. Defining concepts is, for evident reasons, one of the most contested and challenging tasks social scientists can face. Moreover, due to the same nature of the research object – which is, somehow, to show the way in which emotions play a role in the re-definition of political categories – it becomes clear, then, the vicious circle this research has to deal with. Definitions, furthermore, always risk being either too general – and then loosing concrete explanatory power – or too concrete and specific – and then becoming useless to a broader comprehension of phenomena. The same reasoning can be applied to research hypotheses. Nonetheless, the challenging nature of this perspective is nothing but an additional motivation for theoretical reflection. Moreover, another inconvenience this investigation had to face has been the combination of different methodological perspectives. This, obviously, can become a solid criticism to the entire investigation, as far as it can sum the criticism of the different approaches employed and, more importantly, the criticism to any multi-methodological research (to put it simply – not a case study, nor a pure investigation in political theory).

Notwithstanding these problems and possible criticisms, we want also to defend a certain number of results and advantages this research presents. Despite the big scope of the inquiry, what we will try to do in the subsequent pages is to develop a methodological path to the study of the role of emotions in democratic politics and legitimacy, and to take into account normative perspectives that delve into them. Being aware of the immense amount of

variables that are involved, we will focus mainly on the theoretical and discursive level, through which – we argue – is possible to carry out a fruitful inquiry. In other words, the theoretical framework this research is built around constitutes, we think, a relevant contribution. The advantage it has is precisely that it can help a broad understanding of the role of emotions in the political realm, and contribute to vindicate particular democratic and populist theories.

Similarly, the combination of multiple methodologies, far from being a problem *per se*, can enrich this broad understanding. Drawing on the literature on normative political theory, populism, protest movements, and applying different perspectives are indeed strengths of this research. It is clearly evident that even this cross-methodological approach struggles to overtake the positivism and reductionism political science has had when referring to emotions and similar dimensions. Nonetheless, what this thesis aims to do is to take a further step in this direction. We aim to bridge theory and empirical evidence, debates on democracy and debates on social movements, and going beyond this gap – which we see as a considerable obstacle to a comprehensive analysis of democracy and the role of emotions. We will try then to contribute to the dialogue between normative theories and discourse analysis. Linking contemporary political theories to the discursive level of current contentious phenomena is, in our opinion, a good way to answer the questions of this research and to make a scientific contribution. The formulation of our research question in a broad fashion is, therefore, something that helps to go beyond simply analysing emotions in social movements. In this sense, this research tries to contribute to the exploration of what we can call 'emotional legitimacy', and not merely new dimensions of social movements, nor the causal weight of emotions.

Finally, the theory we develop in this thesis is clearly built on some important theoretical precedents in the field as well as on our own previous

contributions. Nonetheless, through the discursive understanding of recent mobilization for democracy, the study also aims at building original theory. In particular, we advance some suggestion for a combination of democratic theory and discourse analysis, focusing on the recent wave of anti-austerity mobilizations. Reading these phenomena through the lens of the role of emotions in politics, they can be seen as an example of the contemporary vectors through which the struggle for popular and democratic legitimacy is currently led. They clearly have represented an immanent critique of the contemporary forms of economic and political power, and a symptom of the declining legitimacy of political and economic institutions. Therefore, stressing the use of emotional vectors within anti-austerity movements, we will aim at highlighting the fundamental role of emotions in politics, particularly when it concerns the creation of political subjects – and particularly 'the people' – as well as the process of political legitimacy and the same definition of democracy.

Chapter 2. Emotions and political research: is there anything new under the sun?

1. Introduction

"Politics is about feelings", writes David Redlawsk in the incipit of his collective essays (Redlawsk, 2006: 1). To see somebody truly angry about the government rescuing of financial institutions, someone fearful that his or her party will lose an election or, again, fearful of some alleged external enemy who would increase criminality, is to see people fill the political world with meaning. In that sense, anger and fear are the lived experience of politics (Tiedens and Leach, 2004). Indeed, there seems to be no reason to highlight that emotions such as fear, anger, hatred, compassion, empathy, and indignation are ubiquitous in individual and social life. Why, then, focusing on emotions? In spite of this apparent evidence, the role of emotions has long received little attention within social and political sciences. In fact, while central to many aspects of politics and social processes, in the second half of the XX century few social scientists have explicitly paid attention to these emotions and their political role.

Political science, in fact, has often seen passion as the enemy of reason. Positive political science, for instance, has largely avoided discussion of emotion altogether by focusing instead on the "cold" voter calculus. On the other hand, normative political theorists have long considered emotion integral to the understanding of politics, but such discussion has often been

motivated by the perceived harm of emotions for liberal values and in democratic deliberation. However, over the last decades there have been some signs of change. Emotions re-entered the study of politics in the 1970s and 1980s, especially for what concerns the research in the fields of economics and sociology of work. Two works are worth noting. Albert O. Hirschman's influential work (1977) pointed out the role played by the ideological pursuit of material interests as one of the intellectual impulses that, historically and ideologically, gave rise to capitalism and, at the same time, could control and limit other more harmful and destructive passions of man (e.g., lust, violence). Similarly, Arlie R. Hochschild, from her *The Managed Heart* (1983), developed a sociology of emotions centred on the "feeling rules", that is the management of the emotional dimension by capitalist and consumerist society.

Since then, emotions are popular again, becoming a 'hot topic' in the study of societies and politics. Indeed, many scholars working in the field of social sciences have attempted to reinvigorate the study of emotion, highlighting its importance for the understanding of political phenomena or in shedding new light on classic questions related to political regimes, political participation, activism and mobilization and so forth. Thus, in recent decades several books on emotions have been published in the field of social sciences, especially influenced by the psychological and sociological perspectives[2].

This chapter is concerned with (2) the conceptual inquiry on emotions and affective dimensions; (3) the relationship between emotion and reason in modern and contemporary political investigation. Particular attention will be paid to the reason/emotion dichotomy as well as to the basic elements of mainstream current political research, namely objectivity and measurability. Additionally, (4) we will emphasise the heterogeneous fields of contemporary political research on emotions. Highlighting the different arguments within

[2] Notable examples of these streams are the *Handbook of Emotion* (Lewis et al., 2008) and the *Handbook of Sociology of Emotions* (Stets & Turner, 2006).

the literature, we will put special accent on the broad political consequences associated to social theorizing. (5) Finally, we will focus on some central 'political emotions'.

In this sense, this chapter stresses that emotions have a broad historical and theoretical role within political and social sciences. Highlighting this role is a fundamental purpose of this thesis, which advocates – as we will develop in further chapters – for a link between discursive analysis of protests and an in-depth analysis of emotions in democratic theorizing.

2. Defining emotions

What is an emotion? Since political philosophy, as well as social research, is a discipline concerned with the nature of the political realm, the basic question about the "definition" should be taken into consideration. The nature of emotions is the core subject of a great deal of contemporary literature. A general consensus is reached on defining emotions as spontaneous, self-induced or externally produced self-feelings. Examples include love, loyalty, pride, joy, enthusiasm, sympathy, hatred, fear, anger, sadness, shame, and so on and so forth. However, as often happens, the definition can differ depending on the approach chosen in the analysis and the elements a researcher highlights (Turner 2009: 341). As we might expect, emotions have been defined in many ways, using many epistemological orientations.

In etymological terms, the word *emotion* comes from a Latin word *movere*, meaning "to move" or to "stir up." It is well known that in *De Anima* (383–323 BC) Aristotle spoke of emotions as the human source of movement. In this perspective, he understood that emotions have a social dimension: they are adaptive responses to situations of social life, and a person's emotional experience provides a framework through which the world is regarded.

Consistent with his standpoint, Aristotle argued that change occurs in what we feel because emotions are the results of a process that enables us to act in the social world.

This definition, suggesting that emotions are ways in which individuals react to social situation, has influenced many modern and contemporary authors. Frijda (1987), for instance, adopts a functionalist approach and defines emotions as "tendencies to establish, maintain, or disrupt a relationship with the environment […] so that emotions might be defined as action readiness" (1987: 71).

Even though our objective is not to delve into a psychological inquiry about emotions, however, at the outset it is helpful to highlight that the language of emotions is complex and apt to be ambiguous. Indeed, everyday discourse tends to conflate what is meant by emotions and closely related notions such as feelings, moods, sentiments, passion, and affects. Over the last decades, many psychological perspectives have developed different framework to conceptualize this 'affective realm'. Ben-Ze'ev (2000: 79–116) tends to define it very broadly, formulating a sociology of emotions that includes all related emotional phenomena such as sentiments, moods, and feelings, and affects. On the contrary, many authors try to differentiate these notions and prefer to draw clear-cut distinctions between different emotional phenomena, also avoiding considering them as "a set of homogeneous phenomena" (Calhoun and Solomon, 1984: 23). While emotions involve actions and movements, and include specific behaviours, posture, gesture, and some facial expression, feelings in contrast are defined as private, not playing out a public role. People react emotionally to social events, and these emotional reactions are tied up with an array of feelings, whose essential elements include some inner components (Damasio, 1994, 2003). As well, sentiments are usually defined in strict connection with emotions. What marks the general distinction is placed on the temporal level: sentiments are seen as enduring emotions, which last

longer than typical emotions. Thus, sentiments are emotions with long duration. Sentiments include romantic and parental love, happiness, patriotism, trust, loyalty, and other enduring social orientations.

2.1 Classification of emotions

Following the controversy over the definition, other common disputes have characterized those social sciences that explore the 'affective realm'. Are there positive and negative, political and non-political emotions? How does the cultural and contextual level influence individual emotions? Dealing with these questions, many philosophical, psychological and political traditions have developed different perspectives.

Frequently, psychosocial inquiries have followed a classification or a typology of emotions. The most common typology operates by dividing emotions into positive and negative ones. While recent literature have argued that we should move beyond this conceptualization in political analysis (Huddy *et al.*, 2007), it has to be noted that this typology can be traced back to classic authors, and still characterizes many studies on this matter.

Another frequent aspect that characterizes the study of emotions and its social and political dimension is the binomial culture-context *versus* individual level. Should emotions be associated primarily with the individual or, on the contrary, with the social and cultural context – or both aspects at once? As well, is there any cultural variation of emotions? In this sense, some scholars tend to draw a distinction between primary, natural and universal emotions – such as happiness, fear, anger or sadness –, and secondary, socially constructed emotions (Turner & Stets 2005: 10-13; Goodwin *et al.*, 2001).

Similarly, can we talk about political and non-political emotions or, framed differently, are there emotions that have a primary and pivotal political dimension? Here, it should be noted that a common classification tends to identify certain *political* emotions – such as anger, fear, resentment, indignations, loyalty, etc. – as central elements in the articulation of the political realm (cf. Arteta 2003: 53-62; Ost, 2004; Mouffe, 2005; 2013; Laclau 2005), as opposed to other emotions that operate at an inner level[3]. Given this context, while there are contending conceptual frameworks in the analysis of emotions, what is important to note is that the breadth of interest in these related topics suggests that the scientific study of the "affective realm" is extremely complex, and an in-depth analyses of it necessarily requires of an interdisciplinary inquiry. However, the aim of our investigation is not to explore emotions *per se*, rather into the political dimension and consequences of emotional elements in the contemporary political realm.

For this purpose, we will explicitly focus on those characteristic and elements of emotions and "affective realm" that we consider relevant to our political analysis. As we will do in further chapters, emphasis should be put on the *essentially political* aspects of emotions: their valence, that is to say, whether they are positive or negative emotions; their cognitive components, and their motivational force.

3. Absence and return?

Since the aim of this research is not to delve into the semantic discussion about the nature and definition of emotions – which is capturing the attention of other disciplines, from sociology to neurosciences – we cannot get into the

[3] As highlighted by Marcos Engelken-Jorge (2011), the 'Lacanian-left' goes even further and refer to a 'affective energy', often speaking of 'enjoyment' and not 'emotions', and thus focuses not on discernible emotional states but on contingent and shifting aspects of subjectivity. (e.g. Glynos, 2001; and Stavrakakis, 1999).

debate on the semantic differences between similar terms as emotion, passion, feelings, affects, etc. in more depth[4]. What should be noted, as Robert Solomon stated (2006: 3), is that "emotions", in general, is simply a category, while particular emotions have the reality of actual experience. Hence, many authors have depicted the auto evidence of emotions. In this regard it is useful to remember that Descartes said that "everyone has experience of the passions within himself, and there is no necessity to borrow one's observations from elsewhere in order to discover their nature". (1955: 331) Solomon also states that philosophers have been concerned about the nature of emotions since the pre-Socratics, and although the discipline has grown up largely as the pursuit of reason – until becoming *the Reason* in the post-Enlightenment thought –, the emotions have always lurked in the background – often as a threat to reason and a danger to philosophy and philosophers (2008: 3).

However, skipping the debate on "definition"[5], does not imply skipping a deeper discussion about the role and the place of emotion in the social sciences. This is particularly important because the place that emotion have generally had in social and human disciplines has to do with, on the one hand, its own definition and, on the other, the role we think emotion play in society and politics. In this regard, contemporary social research mainly view emotions in two ways: as an outcome of social and political processes, as well as a cause of these phenomena. Jack Barbalet (2002) stresses that the idea that emotions are consequences of cultural and cognitive processes is dominant in social research, while the idea of emotion as a social cause is quite often resisted by political scientist, due to their search for general explanation. According to Barbalet, in order to overcome the reductionist vision of emotions' political role, we should first understand the ways in which the relationship between emotion and rationality has been regarded.

[4] For this, useful readings are, for example, Hall (2002); Kingston (2008: 4). Here, we use them interchangeably.

[5] Regarding the numerous theories of emotions, we remind to the Kemper's (1978) general characterization.

Therefore, before focusing our attention to the contemporary interdisciplinary inquiries that put under scrutiny the political and social role of emotions, we should deepen into the reluctance of social research to focus on the political role of emotion, and thus pay attention to the modern marginalization of passions. The absence – or deliberate marginalization – of emotion from modern and contemporary political theories and social inquiries could be explained by several reasons: the modern reason/emotion dichotomy (3.1), and the contemporary epistemology of social sciences (3.2).

3.1. Reason/Emotion dichotomy: modern rationalism

First, the peculiar relationship between modern politics and emotions should be mentioned. From modern rational thought we inherited the general idea that emotions are a kind of excess, usually perceived as women's dangerous features or human beings' bodily sensations that distort the rational ability to make choices and ethical judgments[6]. That is the traditional contrast of emotions with rationality, which persists in the form of classical dualisms such as body versus mind (Massumi, 2002). Indeed, in modern philosophical mainstream and in the Western culture in general, there has been a pervasive dualistic construction that opposed mind and body and analogous dichotomies, such as rational/irrational, thinking/feeling; cognitive/affective; objective/subjective; judgment/prejudice; constructive/destructive; impartiality/partisanship; universal/particular; public/private; male/female; outer/inner, conscious/unconscious; controlled/uncontrolled; individual/mass; order/disorder; etc. (Máiz, 2010: 17). Robert Solomon

[6] It is interesting in this sense the fact that as far back as the Greeks, emotions have been particularly associated with women, who were excluded from citizenship also because of the belief that they were incapable of managing their emotions through reason. The example of courage in Aristotle is suggestive, as it is understood as principally a male virtue.

reminds the master-slave metaphor that has been long used to represent the relationship between reason and emotion. (2008: 3). He states two problems in this relationship: the first one is the reason-emotion distinction itself – as if we were dealing with two different natural kinds, two conflicting and antagonistic aspects of the soul. The second problem refers to the inferior role of emotion, compared to the one of reason. That is to say, the idea that emotion is as such more primitive, less intelligent, more bestial, less dependable and more dangerous than reason, and because of that, it needs to be controlled by reason. Although from the classics to the present politics has been portrayed as an activity encompassing both mind and body, affects and emotions have been largely dismissed by the normative paradigm of rationality. The opposition between reason and emotion was formulated by modern rationalism – and Descartes *in primis* – as a division between *res cogitans* and *res extensa,* spirit and matter, mind and body, that is between an indivisible and non-measurable thinking part and another mechanical and divisible non-thinking body. (Máiz, 2011: 32-33) It is a separation between an upper sphere and an inferior one. Based on this dualism, emotion, feeling and passion have been excluded from the field of modern politics, considered as the empire of reason. Moreover, liberalism, as the dominant modern political ideology and economic organization, institutionalized the division of collective and individual into public and private selves. Doing so, liberalism relegates emotions to the private sphere.

Given this context, we cannot start the effort to think emotions better without dealing with the heritage that this idea of emotions has produced and the distinction of these from reason. The tradition of reasoning that we have inherited, in other words, has been built, at least in part, by putting emotions in a specific and contained place. It is worth noting that understanding the relationship between emotion and human behaviour has long fascinated those who endeavour to contribute to a broader knowledge of human nature. Almost all classical and modern political philosophers include in their

accounts of human nature and political affairs some vision about the role of passion and emotion. Indeed, classical philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Descartes, Hobbes, and Hume - among others - all had theories of emotion, which do not necessarily display a categorically negative vision of them.

Although such philosophers have linked the role of emotions directly to human action, many contemporary authors affirms that emotions have tended to appear on the 'wrong' side of these traditional dichotomies previously mentioned (Calhoun, 2001: 52). In this context, Cheryl Hall has shown how emotions have been cast off by contemporary liberal political theory on the grounds that they represent a danger to reasoned debate (Hall, 2002; 2005). As we will further develop below in this chapter, Cheryl Hall draws on a specific meaning of passion and, specifically, uses this term in order to speak of enthusiasm, ardour, and zeal. Hall states that liberal theorists tend to push passion to the margin of their theories of politics[7], basically in two ways. Either simply ignoring passion in their discussion, or explicitly arguing that passion poses a danger to politics and is best eliminated as much as possible from the public realm. The first way of marginalizing passions is more common in contemporary political theory. The second, on the other hand, is the classical argument of liberal thought: passion should be confined to the private sphere. Classical liberal argument states that passion should be confined to the private sphere of life, because it poses important dangers to the political realm. These dangers are, basically: instability, fragmentation, injustice, and tyranny. As Nancy Rosenblum has stated, the intrusion of affects, emotions or personal factors in the public sphere is conceived as something that perturbs the use of public reason, and even potentially authoritarian and despotic (1987: 167).

[7] Cheryl Hall says "positive arguments on behalf of passion are scarce in liberal political theory". (2002: 728)

Furthermore, Hall stresses that there are two problems with the conventional presumption about passion. The first one is the way it treats passion as if it were an alien force that operates independently to the psyche. The second problem is that they neglect the interconnectedness of passion and reason (2005: 14-15). Hall, indeed, following cognitive and evaluative theorists of emotion (e.g. de Sousa, 1987; Nussbaum, 1994; Solomon, 1993) argues that the two are deeply tied.

As Chantal Mouffe has put it, passions, somehow, have been derided as antipolitical to the modern and contemporary rational project of government (Mouffe, 2002). If classical liberals, such as Locke, Mill, Smith and Madison, demonstrate an "acute awareness of human irrationality" – or the possibility that human beings will often be motivated by "irrational desire" (Holmes, 1995: 43; 267) – Hall, following Stephan Holmes, argues that the basic assumptions of rationalism, with special relation to the place of passion, only begin with neo-classical economic theories. Indeed, Holmes contends that prior to the 19th century, "most human behaviour was understood to spring from unthinking habit or irrational passion. Rational choice of action was exceptional" (1995: 24).

Neo-classical economic theories influenced political liberalism in its vision of human beings. As Albert O. Hirschman has shown, many classical liberal theorists promoted the notion of the "interests" over passions. The aim of liberalism was to transform potentially disruptive passions into more predictable and manageable private interests. The concept of interest has some key functionality features, as Ramón Máiz has shown: "it is discrete, it can be operationalized and measured, and abandons excessively abstract and inefficient notions related to the metaphysics of morals, moral philosophy, or ethical and political principles". (Máiz, 2011: 35) That conceptual focus on interests has contemporary outcomes: it contributed to the shifting of the model of human motivation. Following the liberal economists of the 19th

century, contemporary liberals ted to operate with a model of men, and sometime even women, as motivated primarily by rationally pursued self-interest, rather than irrational passions. (Hall, 2002: 734).

Similarly, David Ost (2004: 230-233) maintains that the marginalization of emotion in the Western tradition is to be traced back to the reason/emotion dualism, which also triggered the association of reason with the realm of institutionalized exercise of power (Ost 2004: 231). This is related with another aspect of the alleged marginalization of emotions: the idea that outside of the institutionalized order is the space of emotional behaviour. In this regard, during the first half of the 20th century social movements and masses were thought of as irrational phenomena triggered by passions (Le Bon 1960).

3.2. Objectivity and measurability

The second reason for the absence of the emotions, somehow related to the modern shifting in attention from passion to interest, is the fact that the focus of the scholarly debates in contemporary political science has been reserved for objective and "objectivable" facts. Emotions, in this context, represent the other face of the coin of the rationalistic tradition on which current investigation is based. It should be noted that the behavioural revolution in the social sciences in the 1960s was an attempt to introduce scientific methods into the study of society. It primarily was an explicit reaction to political philosophy, which was seen to be concerned with normative questions, as well as to institutionalism, which has been seen as lacking theoretical and methodological rigor. This behavioural and empiricist tradition, which played a crucial role in the development of he social sciences, has been influenced by logical and scientific positivism. In ontological terms – which is related to the consideration of the "nature of being" – positivism is

foundationalist: it states that there is a real world independent from the observer. In epistemological terms, positivism believes that phenomena can be explained by their regular and predictable outcomes, objectively understandable. Its focus is upon identifying the *causes* of social behaviour, and the emphasis is upon *explanation*. Positivism is concerned with establishing casual relationships between social phenomena and developing explanatory models. (Furlong and Marsh, 2002)

In this context, social sciences show many difficulties in analysing affective dimensions. Political science dominant trends, focusing on the study of the quantitatively and objectively defined behaviour, tend to avoid such dimensions. Moreover, in order to understand what kind of resistance inquiries into emotions meet, it should be underlined the deep resistance that lies in the implicit behaviourism absorbed by many social scientists and their preference for more "objectivable" facts, as incomes, voting, and so forth. In this light, it is worthy to underline the inherently "ephemeral" nature of emotions, which are normally conceived as insufficiently tangible and not subjectable to quantification. This poses major methodological concerns for political and social studies, by no means unimportant: how to approach the study of emotions and how to integrate them into political analysis? As well, how to take into account the role played by their contextual, cultural and discursive dimensions?

Given this context, due to their vague nature of unobservable inner states, emotions are hard to define, hard to operationalize, hard to measure and hard to isolate from other factors – from *reason* too, as we will stress. Still, in much of the literature, emotions have often been viewed as juxtaposed with rationality, the standard baseline of behavioural expectations. Because emotions can distort rationality – emotional people can become both passive and hyperactive, they say – there is no explanation for emotions and therefore, as the logic goes, it is better to stick to the notion of rationality especially when

it is linked to behaviour. Therefore, despite the growing public consciousness of the importance of emotions in social and political life, within academia the study of the relationship between emotion, power and politics has lagged behind practice.

The reluctance of the social sciences in the study of emotions certainly is something to be explored. Nonetheless, one remark should be made: from the origins of modern and contemporary social and political theorizing to the early 20th century thought, there was ample space for emotions. As noted by Barbalet (2008: 10-13), the explanatory value of emotional categories can be located in the major sociologists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Alexis de Tocqueville, Gustave Le Bon, Emile Durkheim, Vilfredo Pareto, Ferdinand Tönnies, and Georg Simmel are some of the more notable European sociologists who regarded emotional categories as important explanatory variables.

For what concerns the 20th century, psychoanalysis had offered the main tool kit for researching the role of emotions in politics (Lasswell, 1960). In fact, this type of analysis has been successful within different intellectual perspectives such as those of Harold Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics* (1960) and of Theodor Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950) – in the wake of Gustave Le Bon and Freudian influence – before being eclipsed during the following decades. In that context, crowd-based theories dominated protest research until the 1960s. The most influential expression of this pathologizing perspective, Gustave Le Bon (1960) described crowds as impulsive, irritable, suggestible and credulous. Given these traits, crowds are susceptible to the emotional appeals of demagogues. Thus, emotions were considered the driving force for all political action that occurred outside normal institutions, when the normal, reasoning individuals could become angry, violent or unthinking under the influence of a crowd. Most social scientists of the early and mid-twentieth century, including Weber, Durkheim, and Freud accepted

some version of Le Bon's viewpoint. However, in the second part of the 20th century, emotions were erased from social sciences. Whether due to the influence of the rational choice paradigm or simply a legacy of the enlightenment's privileging of reason over emotion, the role of emotion in politics has been understudied, despite the clear connection between how people feel and how they act. Indeed, in the 1970s, many scholars in social sciences abandoned the concept of crowd behaviour and investigated collective action, developing resource mobilization theories based on rational actor assumptions. This new thinking postulates that individuals' inclination to engage in political action as well as to join social movements depends on the material and organizational resources available to them. That is to say, these scholars affirmed political participation or engagement in social movements as rational, and "objectivable" political phenomena. Emotions disappeared from their theoretical models.

4. Bringing emotions back in contemporary political and social research

After having focused on these general aspects of the relationship between emotions and the social sciences, we can ask: has political science neglected or marginalized the role of emotions? Even though it is difficult to affirm that there has been a deliberately neglect of emotions, on the whole it is true that emotions have been somewhat disregarded, in particular in the field of political science.

However, the refusal to consider emotions as a casual element, or even as an element to be considered at all, found opposition from the late 1970s in both European and North American political theory and sociology. Toward the end of the twentieth century, a number of social scientists took up the struggle to bring emotions into serious consideration within the discipline, reflected by renewed attention to the centrality of emotions in political research. A series

of publication on the role of emotional dynamics helped to reinvigorate the political research in many fields. Theodore Kemper's *A Social Interactional Theory of Emotions* (1978), Arlie Hochschild's *The Managed Heart* (1983), and Norman Denzin's *On Understanding Emotion* (1984) are considered among the publication that renewed the interest in emotion in the last decades. As a consequence, the role played by emotions in public life is receiving increased attention in the broad fields of social, political and philosophical studies. In recent years, there have been advances in a wide range of disciplines, such as in neurology (Damasio 1994) and cognitive psychology (Forgas, 2000). There has also been an increased interest in emotions by philosophers (Elster 1999; de Sousa, 1987), anthropologists (Lutz & Abu-Lughod, 1990) and sociologists (Steats, 2006). Furthermore, recent work developing theories of affective intelligence (Marcus, et al., 2000) have given new prominence to the role of emotions in social sciences disciplines, such as political psychology (Lewis *et al*., 2008), political science (Kingston, 2008; 2011) and international relations (Bleiker & Hutchinson, 2008). This heterogeneous literature and fields of knowledge have been undermining the traditional dichotomies between reason and passion, and mind and body, trying to find a location for emotions and affective dimension in social and political investigation.

It is worth noting that the main arguments in the literature are related to the field from which the analyses are carried out. From a philosophical perspective, there is a general recovery of the theme of emotion through reinterpretations of classic works, such as Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, Hume, Rousseau and Tocqueville, among others. Remo Bodei (1991; 2010), Martha Nussbaum (1994; 2001, 2013), and Jack Barbalet (2001; 2002) are only three examples of this trend. From a sociological and cultural studies point of view, contemporary authors point out how emotions have a distinct social character and a specific weight in the formation of collective identities and social bonds (Ahmed, 2004). Moreover, the literature also highlights the influence of emotions in the proper functioning of reason – even in the

rational choice focus[8] – (Frank, 1988), in the process of making political and moral judgment (Marcus et al., 2000; Muldoon, 2008; Nussbaum, 2001). Neuroscience and psychology, in particular, have developed substantial analyses on the social and political role of emotions. These disciplines have shown that not only the absence of emotion engenders irrational decisions – contrary to conventional wisdom – but also that it strongly hinders the capacity to take *any* decision at all. Damasio (2003: 149), among others, has also shown that human action is triggered by processes of decision-making in which both emotion and reason concur. In this context, it has been demonstrated that emotion is involved in reasoning. Indeed, it enhances rather than undermines reasoning (Evans, 2002). Furthermore, there has been a great development in the study of emotions related to the spreading of protest movements (Goodwin et al., 2001; Goodwin and Jasper, 2003). Emotions – it is argued – motivate individuals and groups to engage in political protests. They can be means and ends of movements and they shape, often rhetorically, their goals and strategies.

Similarly, there are many sociologists and anthropologists who have argued that emotions should not be regarded only as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices (Lutz and Abu-Lughod, 1990; Hochschild, 1983: 5; Katz, 1999: 2). In addition, there is a feminist tradition that is bringing the emotions back to political theory and moral philosophy, underlying in the wake of Aristotle the fundamental role played by the emotions in judgment and in political action (Koziak, 2000; Nussbaum, 1994). Interestingly enough, a great deal of contemporary lliterature has taken up the challenge of this perspective and deeply criticised the discriminatory consequences. For instance, criticising modern idea of public space as the place for the expression of universal and imaprtial reason, Iris Marion Young stresses that the excesses of rationalism lead to practical-political consequences: “women

[8] Through the 1990s, several scholars, working from different theoretical perspectives, advanced critiques of rational-choice models and its restricted definition of rationality as calculated maximization of benefits.

must be excluded from the public realm of citizenship because they are the caretakers of affectivity, desire, and the body" (1990: 108-9). In doing so, this feminist perspective deconstructs the Western political thought for ignoring, denying, or denigrating several dichotomies used to denigrate women (mind versus body, thinking versus feeling, public versus private, and so on) and, consequently the role of emotions in social and political life (Calhoun, 2001).

Scholars in disciplines such as psychology, sociology, philosophy and feminist theory disagree with each other about how emotions should be valued, but they do agree on the need to oppose two stereotypical views of emotions: that they are purely private and irrational phenomena. As Craig Calhoun (2001) has cautioned, such approach falls into the same trap of dividing and dichotomizing of mind-and-body and reason-and-emotion. "Putting the emotions in their place" as Calhoun says, is to study emotions in such way as to transcend and not reproduce this pervasive dualism. In this light, Robert Solomon and Martha Nussbaum stress that emotions are important forms of knowledge and evaluative thought (Nussbaum, 1994; Solomon, 1993).

In this context then, even more empiricist political analysis has been challenged by this emotional return. Influenced by disciplines such as neuroscience, psychology and sociology, political science has started a process of revisiting its core principles of epistemology, opening up to broader methodologies outside the hegemony of hyperrationalist explicative models. In this regard, emotional factors have increasingly been explored and accepted within the spectrum of the classic explicative variables – i.e. interest, utility maximization, civic culture, political opportunity structure, etc. – under the belief that "the political brain is an emotional brain" (Westen, 2007). Indeed, the affective dimension – especially common feeling such as fear, anxiety, enthusiasm, apathy and hope – can be found in many political phenomena such as electoral behaviour, as well as in political communication, corruption, and so forth (Barbalet, 2001; Marcus, 2002: 104)

Given this context, although most of the scholarship is divided between those who push for a general theory of emotion and those who endorse a deeper understanding of the role of particular emotions, we will stress especially the broad implications of emotions in political theorizing.

4.1 Normative questions

In both conceptualizing the political world and the prompting of normative principles – the language of political theory –, emotions have had a special place in different traditions of thought. As already mentioned, emotions such as fear, anger, wrath, rage, and so forth, have been studied by such classical political philosophers as, among others, Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Spinoza, Hume and so forth. Yet, it seems that the historical importance of passions in politics has been recognized above all in the phases of revolts or revolutions – their phases of their highest intensity (Marx, 1994)[9]. The French Revolution, for example, has been viewed as one of the biggest expression of people's ire in European history, since it completed a 'democratization' of emotions (Bodei, 2010: 100; Sloterdijk, 2010), which led commoners and poorest people to revolution. Indignation about the French crown's privileges and about aristocratic corruption and injustice is collected by the Jacobins: ire was legitimate even in its most violent form of Terror. Beyond the political consequences of the French Revolution, political thinkers have generally taken into consideration the role of emotions in politics, either to highlight their political and social roles or, as within the liberal mainstream, to relegate them to the private sphere. Within this context, it is worthy to note that liberalism was born out of the fires of civil and religious wars, as well as social and economic uncertainty. It should not be forgotten that most of the key concepts

[9] Beyond his economistic vision, Marx establishes a direct connection between the collective sensibilities and the 'revolutionary energy'.

of Hobbes, Locke, Milton and others were a set of responses to the violent and fearful conditions in which they lived. As Judith Shklar underlined, the 'politics of fear' dramatically informed classical liberal theorizing at the beginning of modernity (Shklar and Hoffmann, 1998).

Similarly, in contemporary normative political theory, numerous approaches have focused on the new appraisal of the emotional dimension. The same dismantling of the reason-emotion divide implies a series of normative questions political theorists have been faced with. On a general note, it has been asked what kind of emotional engagement liberal and democratic regimes need: what affective dispositions (if any) does liberal democracy require from citizenry? Liberal democratic theory has focused its attention on the repercussion of these ways of conceptualizing the interplay of emotions and reason for the understanding and the possibilities for democratic engagement. Most contemporary political theorists agree indeed that emotions have a central role in the citizens' support of liberal values. Rebecca Kingston (2008) is clear in pointing out the impact that the new perspectives on emotions can have on contemporary liberal democratic theory:

> "They can generate a rethinking of our traditional ways of distinguishing between private and public; they can lead us to seek greater clarity on the ways in which emotion continues to sustain current political commitments in liberal and democratic regimes; they can contribute to recognizing better outcomes in democratic practice including democratic deliberation; and finally, in general, they allow us to develop a more realistic set of political expectations". (2008: 11)

Within this context, liberal theorists have particularly focused on finding criteria in order to choose the emotions that can further the cause of democracy and those that can detract from it. How to differentiate emotions that fit with democracy and those that are not conducive to liberalism and democratic values?

4.1.1 Commitment to liberal regimes

Belonging to this 'emotional renaissance', Cheryl Hall (2002; 2005) rather than supporting the conventional liberal vision of emotions, argues that we should see passions from a particular perspective: passion as a desire for an envisioned good can be a different conceptualization that can lead to a different comprehension of the role of the affective dimension in the political realm. As we have already mentioned, Hall conducts an overall analysis of the marginalization of passion in liberal political theory, stating that it is both unjustified and harmful. She advocates for a conception of passion as the desire for an envisioned good, political theory – especially liberal theory is guilty of its marginalization – can reintroduce the study of passion in its perspective. Thus, Hall supports a deeper consideration of passion in politics and in political theory. In doing so Hall states that, although liberalism is often presented as ideally gender-neutral, bringing passion back into political debates would stop the perpetuation of this gendered dichotomy reason/passion and the consequent marginalization of women in the political realm. Hall's argument is that a misleading understanding of the role of passion in politics – namely attributing instability, injustice and violence to it – constitutes a weakness of liberal political theory.

Hall's argument, as we have already stated, is that the common liberal approaches to passion, both the explicit rejection and the tacit exclusion, are "inadequate because they stem from impoverished characterizations of passion and, as a consequence, lead to impoverished approaches to politics". (2005: 28). However, she points out that, although liberal theorists generally exclude or overlook passion, they still rely on passion to make politics work (2005: 31). Quoting classical liberal authors, from Locke to the Federalist, and contemporary liberal thinkers such as Rawls, Hall argues that passion is nonetheless at the heart of the liberal perspective, either as a latent horizon to be avoided or as a moral dimension – the 'sense of justice' in Rawls – to be

considered as the outset of the normative political action. Despite this liberal contradiction – denying passion and at the same time relying on it –, Hall stresses that the conventional negation of emotional dimension in politics made by liberal theory also has practical consequences. Namely, Cheryl Hall underlines two prominent consequences, which are the perpetuation of gender inequality in politics and the stifling of political innovation (2005. 36).

> "Liberal mandate to keep passion out of politics is neither feasible nor desirable. It is not feasible because it relies on a dichotomy between reason and passion that is unsustainable. […] Moreover, even if passion could be excluded from politics, doing so would not be desirable: passion is indispensable to a fully democratic polity". (2005: 3-4).

Therefore, emotions and passion should then be established as central categories, alongside other concerns. This horizon of analysis can give new importance to the study of passion in politics, as well as creating a new image of politics as a passionate activity. Indeed, Hall points out, there are at least three ways in which passion is important to politics. First, emotions are seen as a key component of political values and choices. Second, they contribute to create the bonds of political community. In this regard, it should be noted that, for instance, a sense of shared history, shared goals or values, creates a feeling connection that is of great importance for the constitution of political communities (in all its variants, nationalism, patriotism, communitarian belonging, etc.). Third, emotions can be seen as motivators of political action. Since feelings and emotion are concrete basis of knowledge and judgment, they lead to action, because they inspire people to pursue the things they value in life. Passion, indeed, motivates not only private action but public action as well. In summary, passion plays a vital role in the political construction of individual and collective identities, operating as both 'mental frames' and 'action tendencies' (Goodwin *et al*., 2001; Flam and King, 2005), and being therefore part of the inescapable agonistic dimension of politics

(Mouffe, 2002). Examples of this political and social role of emotion can be found in the broad spectrum of feelings and affections. Apathy, hope, disgust, trust, shame, indignation, friendship, anger, fear, etc. have all been integrated into political analysis.

Cheryl Hall, in this context, is right in her attempt to find a new path for the consideration of emotions and passion in political realm. Arguing against the common liberal vision of passion, Hall stresses that conceptualizing passion as – among other things – inherently irrational, egoistic, extreme and private, does not allow liberal theorists to recognize important dimensions of political life. The 'trouble with passion', as she states, is the fact that on the one hand passion, viewed as the source of mass instinctual intolerance, raises the spectre of violent behaviour, and on the other hand passion is seen as the motivation of cooperation and justice.

In this context, Hall's argument is that both classical and contemporary liberal approaches to passion are inadequate because they "stem from impoverished conceptions of passion and, as a consequence, lead to impoverished approaches to politics" (2002: 736) Indeed, Hall states that if passion is considered subjective and properly private – consequently partial and selfish – on the other hand reason is considered objective and public – thus impartial and just. Drawing on heterogeneous sources such as Plato, Rousseau and contemporary feminism, Hall tries to overcome the common liberal perspective about the role of emotions in politics. Following these different traditions, she supports the idea that passion may be deeply thoughtful in three dimensions at least. It is essential 1) insofar as emotions tie our sense of meaning and value in life; 2) passion is a crucial source of power, insofar as it provides the motivation for action. And 3) passion is profoundly concerned with justice, insofar as it is the source of our connection to others and our imagination of a better world. (2005: 5).

Whereas reading Plato draws attention to the point that political *ideals* involve passion, and if reading Rousseau allows Hall to draw attention to the point that political *community* requires passion, contemporary feminists point out that political *action* engages emotional dimensions. Given these statements, Hall underlines that passion is particularly important for the political change and innovation. If resignation, disaffection or apathy keep people docile and obedient, Hall argues, the enthusiasm for an envisioned good – e.g. the desire for a better world – represents a motivating power for political action. Therefore, since political participation and engagement are central to the idea and practice of democracy, the passionate dimensions that boost the civic commitment to politics are central to democracy itself (2005: 130).

4.1.2 Deliberation and justice

A similar position is developed by Sharon Krause (2008) who particularly focuses on the nature of practical reason vis-à-vis sentiment. According to her, the relationship between practical reasoning and the affective dimension raises relevant questions about the nature and source of normativity and the motivation of political action. At stake in this debate is above all the promise of impartial justice. The disputes operates, according to her, in the following terms: the rationalists worry that impartial justice will be impossible if reason cannot transcend passions; the sentimentalists worry that it will be impractical (because unmotivated) if reason does not engage passions. She states that "our theories of moral judgment and democratic deliberation havebeen caught on the horns of a dilemma: they have either been toorationalistic to motivate action and decision, or they have been tooindiscriminately rooted in the passions to carry normative weight" (2008: 6). However, according to Krause, neither of these two positions succeeds to preserve a proper balance between reason and passion. She maintains that the rationalist approach err in rejecting the passion almost

entirely, while the opposed perspective seems to give up impartiality in the name of affectivity.

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Sharon Krause acknowledges that passion can indeed be dangerous to liberty and equality (2008: 200). Harmful emotions such as cruelty and rage can indeed be disruptive in politics. However, the way to prevent these dangers is not to abandon passions for a form of reason that abstracts from feeling altogether. Krause advocates for a new politics of passions, in which affective impartiality has a central role in political deliberation. For Krause the point is that, given that we cannot fully transcend the influence of sentiment, the challenge is to understand how the inevitable, affective dimensions of practical deliberation can be reconciled with the demands of impartiality.

> "Since judgment and deliberation cannot do without the passions, the best hope for impartiality lies not in trying to transcend passion, but in reforming the political context that helps shape them" (2008: 110).

The struggle for determining what should shape democratic practice in communities that seek equal justice and voice for citizens is at the heart of the Krause's work. Theoretically and methodologically it pushes beyond the neo-Kantian position on the motivations for practical reasoning. Acknowledging the seminal work of Rawls and Habermas – among others – on justice and democratic legitimacy does not imply maintaining a rigid rationalistic position on sentiments and their contribution to impartiality. Drawing then on the politics of judgment of Hume, Krause advocates a value of impartiality and equal respect, which can be inclusive of moral sentiment. Following a Humean approach is indeed a fruitful theoretical way to permit the acknowledgment of the key value of affect in practical reasoning. Challenging the common assumption according to which for impartial deliberation feelings must be overcome. Only taking into account this fundamental aspect, argues Krause, we can be able to articulate impartial judgment and deliberation. Krause argues therefore that contemporary societies need a normative account of

affective deliberation that can define the right and wrong feelings in the deliberative context and that support the ideal of impartiality. In this sense, sentiments play more than simply a motivational role; they have a key function in building what we mean by *reciprocity*. Thus Krause advocates for cultivating the capacity for somehow "feel with the others" through deliberation.

However, Sharon Krause insists that there is no more need for passion in politics. What she does is to illuminate the ways in which sentiments (inevitably and necessary) figure in moral judgment, political deliberation, and the authority of law, and thus to promote guidelines for accommodating this affective dimension in ways that support rather than obstruct the central ideal of impartiality (2008: 203). While a truly impartial and affectively engaged deliberation requires liberal-democratic politics, this form of politics, itself, needs engaged and passionate public discussions. By insisting on the "holistic—and therefore more realistic—account of practical reasoning, in which a affective and cognitive modes of consciousness are deeply entwined" (2008: 201), Krause aims at grounding her view of a kind of politics in which passion and justice are strictly linked.

On a similar note, Michael Morrell (2010) attempts to draw a line of connection between deliberative theory and the relatively new attention to the emotional dimension. Morrell is aware of the shortcomings of contemporary deliberative theory and the unhelpful dichotomy between reason and passion – and the apparent privileged focus on rational argumentation – it is trapped in. As well, he is sensitive to the fact that, as he argues, deliberative theory fails to fulfil democracy's promise of equal consideration for all, and thus somehow denies its ideal promise of justice. In this context, Morrell develops an argument that resonates with Krause's link between passions and justice, and considers that an inclusionary and equal consideration for all is possible if empathy finds a significant place in

deliberative theory.

He argues that the cultivation of empathy is a fundamental task for democratic purposes. From a 'moral' point of view, it is trough an empathic perspective that we can develop a better – truly democratic – relationship with other's opinions. "Empathy – argues Morrell – is not a feeling, but rather a process through which others' emotional states or situations affect us" (2010: 41). Empathy has a series of beneficial components that foster a democratic intersubjective relationship: if it generally leads to tolerance and mutual respect (Morrell, 2010: 115), it creates the conditions for a democratic openness toward others' points of view, and thus a democratic inclusion and fairness (2010: 125). Empathy, in this sense, can help us become better democrats. Moreover, similarly to neo-Aristotelian theorists such as Martha Nussbaum, Morrell points out that contemporary societies need to foster the civic education in empathy (2010: 187). The purpose is to generate the conditions of possibility of an 'empathetic democracy', in which people attentively listen to each other, acknowledging others' positions and avoiding destructive conflict. A model of democracy in which, although the result is not necessary the agreement, citizens can be adversarial and respectful (2010: 157).

Yet, both Sharon Krause and Michael Morrell struggle to excape from the liberal paradigm that tends to divide suitable *versus* harmful passisons for democracy. In fact, it seems that in Morrell's account empathy is a 'reasonable' democratic passion in so far as it is conducive to liberal, peaceful, and harmonious relationships. It is true that Morrell acknowledges that people will not be able to empathize with absolutely everyone, yet empathy could appear a 'depoliticizing' emotion in his account, especially if we take into account his rejection of agonistic democracy (2010: 195). In this context, one might doubt that empathy is the proper – and unique – emotional disposition for democratic contexts. If a minimum of empathy between citizens can be a

necessary condition for an intersubjective dialogue, it does not imply that the democratic play involves the exclusion of other affective dispositions – especially those emotional responses often considered as harmful, such as anger, indination, hate. As we will futher show in the next chapters, these emotions also can be seen as constructive – not only 'desctuctive' – political dimensions. After all, if the point is to prompt justice within democratic context, how oppressed and disfavoured groups could empathise with those who are considered as the culpable of the oppression? How and to what extent should deliberative theory only rely on 'positive' emotional dispositions? How to ask citizens to empathise with those who are seen as guilty of their political and economic fraud?

5. Thinking *the political* through emotions

In the last chapters of this research we will further insist on these normative issues, especially putting emphasis on the recent democratic developments that have brought fruitful insights about the place and role of emotions in democracy. In this sense we will draw particularly on the work of Chantal Mouffe and her agonistic approach, in which passions are essentially involved in the conception of democracy and the conflictive nature of politics. However, before further dealing with this debate, here we will give a brief overview of the recent literature that has focused on the affective dimension of politics. In particular, beyond the purely normative (liberal) arguments, it is worth noting the rich theoretical approaches that have insisted on the fundamental role of certain emotions in society.

The idea that there are certain emotions that are *essentially political* is present in the scholarship (e.g. Flam & King, 2005). Among others, loyalty, solidarity, anger, fear, resentment and shame – without exhausting the list of "political" emotions – are often seen as the key emotions that construct and support

social structures, as well as relations of domination. It is well known, for instance, that Max Weber associated loyalty with the legitimate systems of domination. He thought of loyalty as a key element that links the powerless to the powerful: the loyalty to the powerful is at the base of every legitimate form of domination and, together with fear, constitutes a field that shapes obedience. In this line, Jürgen Habermas (1987: 320), argued that modern political institutions are systems that supply administrative services and political decisions for loyalty and taxes. In this sense he attributes great significance to loyalty binding role, and affirms that along with gratitude they are the two emotions that cement social relations converting them into permanent institutions.

Helena Flam (Flam & King, 2005) has lately developed a research agenda for the study of emotions, putting special attention on the concrete role emotions have in society. Aiming at broadening the perspective that has been developed especially on social movements and the work emotions do within them, she contributes by identifying a series of theoretical tools for the macro-study of emotions and society. While most social movement researchers have so far focused on the mobilizing role of emotions or the feelings within members of collective mobilizations, the research Flam develops contends that emotions do not exclusively belong in the realm of the micro-politics of social movements – and thus she does not merely treat emotions in an instrumental and functionalist manner. Rather, according to Flam, we should connect the micropolitics of social movements to the macro-politics. In this vein, she points out that emotions such as loyalty, anger, shame, and fear are inner features of both social structures and relations of dominations. Within this framework, the role of emotions becomes essentially political. Some, such as gratitude and loyalty, are the most important *cementing* emotions. Anger, in contrast, is viewed as a *sanctioning* and *activating* emotion, or hate and distrust as *subversive counter-emotions*.

It is noteworthy that much of the recent scholarship has been focusing on some specific emotions. Fear and anger, for instance, have attracted particular attention in recent years, and deserve further consideration. Although during the main part of the 20th century – according to the general view of emotions in social science – accounts of fear tended to be individualized and pathologized, in recent years, fear has not fortuitously attracted much interest among social scientists. Although further debate on the psychological debate would be of great utility for its clarification[10], we want to consider the political relevance of fear, that is its inter-subjective value. Social theorists and political scientists, as well as sociologists and historians have focused on this emotion, trying to shed light on its relationship with politics – apparently obvious and without interest – that remains ambiguous and that often has been disregarded by political science (Robins, 2004). In Max Weber's vision, fear is another essential emotion for every form of legitimate domination. Weber (1970: 79) argued that individual and collective action in a given community is "determined by highly robust motives of fear and hope." According to Kemper (1978: 55–6), the causes of fear are to be found whether in the "structural conditions of insufficient power […] or […] in the excess of the other's power".

In the late 1990s and in the early 2000s the politics of fear has become an important topic in political sociology and political science. Frank Furedi's C*ulture of Fear: Risk-Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation* and Barry Glassner's *The Culture of Fear: Why American are Afraid of the Wrong Things* exchanged Ulrich Beck's "anxiety" for "fear" and reframed the analysis of risk

[10] From a psychological standpoint, fear facilitates the development of perceptual and cognitive processes necessary to assess danger and protect the self from harm. Fear becomes highly adaptive, as motivation for avoidance and escape. It is worthy noting that fear, and other terms used more or less interchangeably like horror and terror, in psychological terms, are often taken to be a self-evident emotional response to an external extreme situation. It is normally forgotten that fear is also a social phenomenon: as how people behave in specific circumstances depends upon wider cultural, political and social norms, as well as expectations and beliefs. Similarly, rage or anger, are considered as both positive and negative emotions or, in Martha Nussbaum's words, as humanizing" and "dehumanizing" tendencies (Nussbaum, 1994: 404).

society. Furedi and Glassner's position has now become common wisdom: we live in a culture dominated by fear and this fear has damaging social consequences. They both argue that, as this fear is often irrational, exaggerated, or misplaced, it is not simply a reasonable response to the conditions of risk society, but the result of a debilitating obsession with safety or the outcome of a media-produced perception of heightened risk. The idea that governments are increasingly manufacturing, drawing upon and reproducing fear has become the predominant focus of attention in scholarly works. The objective of this politics of fear would be to gain support for positions on issues, thereby enforcing the idea that because we are vulnerable to threats and cannot risk the consequences of not acting, certain policies and government's actions have no alternatives.

Some go so far as to state that "fear has become the emotion through which public life is administered" (Bourke, 2006: 10). Others tend to assume the effects of fear results in creating fearful masses (Pain and Smith, 2008). Engin Isin (2004), on his count, argues that Anglophone neoliberal state societies are now governed through neurosis: "the culture of fear" underplays "the fact that people not only conduct their lives with affects and emotions but also in the absence of capacities for evaluating full and transparent information" (Isin, 2004: 220). As Joanna Bourke argues in *Fear: A Cultural History* (2006), our understanding of, response to, and even subjective feeling of fear are historically determined. That is, it is fundamentally constituted through a dynamic process with the social. While it is obvious that the causes and sources of fear have transformed along the historical axis, it is unclear how one would measure its intensity or compare different historical moments. Although much of the work that follows Furedi and Glassner typically posits a shift in the intensification of social fear following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, most argue that the origins of this "culture of fear" can be traced back to 20th century developments. There is a plethora of examples, including increased globalization, the scientific-technological advancements,

the loss of traditional sources of authority, and fundamentalist religious beliefs. So, fear relates to the world "risk society" (Beck, 1999), in which the "unpredictable, uncontrollable and ultimately incommunicable" consequences of risks increasingly circulate at a global scale (Beck, 2002: 40). According to Beck, it is not that life has become more dangerous. It is that risk has now de-bounded, in spatial, temporal and social terms, so that "the hidden central issue in world risk society is *how to feign control over the uncontrollable* – in politics, law, science, technology, economy and everyday life" (Beck, 2002: 41, original emphasis). Furthermore, the interest of social scientists for this theme has obviously spread out after a series of contemporary events, most notably the terrorist attacks in the beginning of this century and the so-called "war on terror". Since 2001, fear has become primarily focused on issues of international reach, like immigration, disease, and terrorism. All this has encouraged social scientists and political theorists to dig into the patterns of fear, highlighting different perspectives of analysis: the paradoxes of contemporary insecurity (Castel, 2003; Furedi, 2005, 2007), the risks of industrialized societies (Beck, 1999) or the fluid nature of current fears (Bauman, 2006).

Similarly, recent literature has pointed out the relevance of others emotions, at the opposite side of the spectrum of emotions, such as rage, anger, outrage, wrath, indignation, fury, hatred and so forth. These emotions have been increasingly analysed within the field of social sciences. From a psychological point of view, anger is conceptualized as an active affective reaction to a problematic situation of social hierarchy. In the Western culture, anger is a Janus-faced emotion, considered to have both socially constructive and disruptive effects. On one hand it is considered as a noble passion of rebellion against injustice or changing the state of affairs; on the other hand it is viewed – and feared – as a losing of judicious thinking. While in the Christian tradition anger represents a capital vice, liberalism has often silenced this kind of

emotion because reason is defined as technical rationality (Weber, 1958; Bodei, 2010).

Simon Thompson notes that there are two distinct and closely related ideas in the study of anger in politics. The first is the notion that anger often leads to mobilization; that is, that anger as an emotion is capable of motivating people into political action and participation. Secondly, we have the idea that the reason people mobilize is too often overcome some form of perceived and real injustice. In this sense, it has been emphasized in recent literature that the capacity to respond with anger is crucial to a sense of justice (Nussbaum, 1994: 403; Solomon and Murphy, 1990: 242).

Anger is usually an immediate, spontaneous response to the perception of unjustified harm or pain to the self or to the social contours. Thus, anger is manifested in support of position or status in a social hierarchy, and can be considered a positive emotion insofar as it can have a functional value. That is to say, anger mobilizes our energy and resources in service of goal attainment. Ben-Ze'ev (2000) affirms that, "[l]ike other emotions, anger is functional when it is in the right proportion, for example, when it is expressed in a socially constructive way without becoming highly aroused" (2000: 386). Although in an era of increased personal and collective sense of insecurity – job insecurity, insecurity, civil, economic, etc. – it is difficult to turn the anger towards clear goals, to transform it into a constructive political power, anger is viewed as motivating people to engage in political action, fuelling collective struggle for justice and recognition. Thus, if anger is something people feel when they experience injustice, then understanding anger may offer some insight into the nature of injustice itself. If anger motivates political action, then its study may well offer new insights into the character of struggles for power.

Theodore Kemper (1978; 1990) argues that we experience anger as a 'real emotion' when we are confronted with power that seriously limits our

autonomy and we attribute the blame for the loss of autonomy to the power-holder. In a similar context, Martha Nussbaum asks, "What moral sentiments will be particularly important in such a political-liberal society, based on ideas of capability and functioning? […] I have frequently suggested that anger and indignation will be such core sentiments because they react to harm or damage" (Nussbaum, 2004: 345).

In this context, although the collective expression of anger has historically been discouraged – due to its close association with irrationality, aggression or violent excess –, recent studies on social movements have demonstrated that anger motivates and fuels activity and collective struggles for justice (Goodwin et al., 2001; Jasper, 1997). As Gamson (1992: 31–2) pointed out long ago, injustice and inequalities may cause demobilizing affects on citizens, such as cynicism and resignation. Similarly, social and political injustice may also cause, moral outrage, anger – as well as hope – that are crucial for mobilization. The political value of anger, in this line, has been seen to lie in its capacity to communicate that an injustice has been committed, and through this anger to question the legitimacy of power (Lyman, 2004: 133).

In a thought-provoking exploration Peter Sloterdijk (2010) investigates the role of rage as one of the driving forces of human history. In *Rage and Time* he reflects on the sociopolitical ordering, coding, and accumulation of rage, from the Greek mythology to the contemporary world. In his global vision of this emotion, the German philosopher attempts to rehabilitate rage as a political category. From his standpoint, the theory and history of rage is primarily a theory of the politico-religious mediations of the processes of overcoming offended pride and of aspiring for revenge. In his analysis, Sloterdijk points out that, when supported through justified indignation, rage can be an emancipatory fore. In that light, making a contribution to our understanding of the constitutive role of affects in world politics, Sloterdijk provides an historical contextualization of the most recent violent eruptions of anger.

6. Conclusion

Here we have dealt with some of the contemporary debates on emotions and politics. We have firstly shown the wide spectrum these debates cover and, secondly, their respective arguments. As well, we have contended that it is necessary to take into consideration the wide range of social sciences that make a contribution in the understanding of the role of emotion in politics, and critically engage with the reason *versus* emotion dichotomy. For the research aim of this investigation, widening the spectrum of the various social sciences is an essential task. In order to deal with the emotion-politics nexus it is essential – as we will argue further on this thesis – to broaden the perspective of analysis. Recent studies in political psychology, neurology, philosophy, as well as social studies can contribute to a better understanding of the nature of emotions and their relationship with the political realm. Although defining emotion – and showing the contemporary debates over the definition – is not the aim of this study, it is nonetheless a first step we have to take. This is the way to show how and to what extent emotions have entered the political debate in recent decades.

Moreover, drawing on a wide range of approaches and field of studies, we also aimed at showing the broad historical and theoretical implication that a focus on emotions involves. Political thinking about the affective dimension is, at once, rooted in 'classical' philosophical disputes – the concern with emotions for social life is as old as philosophy itself –, and opens up relatively new and thought-provoking research paths.

In the next chapter, after dealing with the epistemological implication related to the political research on emotions, we will set our theoretical and methodological proposal, which will combine discourse analysis and

normative thinking about the emotions in populist and democratic theory. As we have already mentioned in the first chapter, this combination of perspectives – we argue – will enable us to better grasp the broad role of emotions in politics, as well as providing fruitful tools to understand the phenomena we will take as our case study. Indeed, the critique that recent anti-austerity mobilizations moved towards the concrete functioning of contemporary democracies was also made through emotional elements. In order to better comprehend this critique, and its theoretical implication, it will be useful to take into consideration what we have outlined in this chapter and will do in the next one, that is, these heterogeneous ways in which emotions were considered within the broad field of social and political studies.

Chapter 3. Building our model for emotions, protests and populism. Theoretical and methodological framework

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter we have focused on the broad research areas that brought emotions back into political studies. While we have contended that it is necessary to take into account of the broad range of social sciences in the understanding of the political role of emotions, here we want to delve into our theoretical framework that will enable us to conduct our research. We will thus set our methodological proposal, which will enable us to link together heterogeneous and apparently separated fields of study, such as the political analysis of emotions and theories of populism and democracy. They have, we will argue, some interesting points of convergence.

As we have already suggested, this study is primarily based on two methodological perspectives, which makes this thesis a theory-oriented investigation that operates via a discursive analysis. The combination of these different theoretical perspectives, which is needed – as we will argue – to overcome the lacuna in the understanding the political role of emotional dynamics, turned out to be one of the most salient features of this research. In this sense, instead of debating whether discourse analysis is a more effective tool than a pure theory-oriented perspective for our purpose, this thesis combines both techniques. As such, while it is contended that it is time to break free of the idea that it is necessary to delve into only one specific

methodology in the study of politics, the aim is to link discourse analysis with a broader vision of emotions and their role in shaping social reality.

This chapter is organized as follows. We will firstly focus on the epistemological implications related to the political study on emotions (2), showing the strict connection between the cognitive consequences they bring to the forefront and the process of framing the reality. We will then turn to the methodological proposal of this research (3), explaining the different methods that are combined in the research. We will especially highlight the discursive level of our investigation and its link with populism and normative thinking. Moreover (4) we will briefly take into account the essential reflection about populism and particularly the discursive approach developed by the so-called Essex School, and finally (5), we will delve into our own approach and insist on the theoretical nature of the research.

2. Emotions and epistemological implications

The recent literature we have outlined in the previous chapter brought emotions back into the discussion. From the heterogeneity of works on emotions at least two main theoretical consequences can be derived. The first one, by some means related to the explicatory goal of political analysis, is that social sciences should consider emotions as part of political reasoning. The second one, more focused on the normative level of political reflections, suggests that emotions play a crucial role in the cognitive and normative construction of politics.

Nonetheless, some criticism of this diverse literature should be addressed. Firstly, there is still a lack of interdisciplinarity in the study of the political role of emotions. Even though psychology and neurology have broadly influenced political research, most of these works are still resisting about incorporating

broad and cross-disciplinary methods of analysis; rather there is a preference to focus on specific field of knowledge. Secondly, little attention has been paid to the theoretical and historical implications. Although philosophy and political theory are two essential domains of the re-entering of emotions in the political research, few authors are filling the deficient attention to the connection between the history of political thought and the current articulation of political affairs. Specifically, there is a lack of analysis of the role of emotions in the process of conceptualization of political categories. While political philosophers and historians have highlighted how the foundations of our thinking are related to emotions, few contemporary analyses are devoted to the political role of emotions in the construction of modern political ideas and their current version (e.g. Kingston, 2011; Krause, 2008; Nussbaum, 2013; Solomon, 1993). Thirdly, there is a broad epistemological issue that the study of emotion forces us to deal with, which recent literature – as we have mentioned – point out: the nature of our knowledge. How to deal with emotions and their political role? Although many authors have carried out analyses of concrete emotions – especially in the fields of psychology, sociology and protest movement analysis –, emphasis on the epistemological consequences for political research have been underestimated by political scientists and theorists (Kingston, 2011:99-106; Neuman *et al*., 2007).

2.1 Emotions, cognition, and the framing of reality

The relationship between the political realm and the emotional dimensions forces us to delve into the epistemological construction of political research. The theoretical engagement with emotions in the last decades contributed to some innovative epistemological trends. Neuroscience, poststructuralist feminist theory, psychoanalytical theory and critical analysis innovations have, among other perspectives, challenged the conventional oppositions between emotion and reason, and the complex relationship between power,

knowledge and emotion. As well, they have questioned the misunderstood place of emotion within political theorizing – that is, the affective dimension of the normative (Koziak, 2000). Given these heterogeneous perspectives, we need to take into account the epistemology of contemporary social and political research.

In his overview of contemporary literature on emotion, Máiz (2011) mentioned the most relevant arguments advanced by this heterogeneous literature. Briefly, we can state that:

1. The mind/body and reason/emotion dichotomies are to be revisited. Emotion and reason are both anchored to the body.

2. Reason and emotion are symbiotic in the evaluative mental processes and in the determination of what is crucial and vital for individuals and the collectivity.

3. In that context, emotions have a cognitive dimension. That is, emotion contributes to knowledge and judgment: "there is no cognition without feeling" (Melucci, 1995: 45).

4. Emotions, and their cognitive dimension, are in part socially constructed. Emotions are at least in part determined by cultural and socio-structural factors, by processes of socialization.

5. Moreover, emotions are influenced by and have an influence on judgments, especially with regards to values and beliefs. In this vein, emotions have advanced our understanding of cognitive processes and the mechanisms that influence political judgement, and decision-making.

In all this, emotions are seen to have some essential and intrinsic dimensions: *cognitive; evaluative; sensitive; motivational* (Ben- Ze'ev, 2000). Recent scholarship suggests that emotions may help citizens use political heuristics more efficiently. According to the theory of *affective intelligence* (Marcus *et al.*, 2000), emotions complement reason by signalling to the brain when to rely on

heuristic processes and when to expend greater cognitive effort. Emotions, in other words, play an important role in the elaboration of information about specific circumstances – our knowledge of the world – as well as in the creating a personal and collective disposition to act with respect to this information. Emotions, then, are at work in both *our action* in the political realm, as well as in our *comprehension* of it. One might ask, thus, how to understand and to deal with something that contributes to our knowledge. In this context, the return of emotions in political investigation opens up new perspectives on the epistemological front. Objectivity and measurability – the core epistemological traits of current political science's mainstream – seem to be at the centre of theoretical and methodological disputes. An alternative ontological perspective might be introduced in the analysis of the political role of emotion. Since recent literature on emotions questions modern dichotomies and the rigid separation between the object of analysis and the subject of knowledge – that is the independence of the phenomena studied from its examiner –, one should deal with the ways in which emotional factors frame the way one comes to develop an understanding.

However, although emotions bring to the forefront these broad methodological issues, it is impossible to delve into them here in details. What seems clear is that in recent decades a series of research methods for the analysis of emotions and politics has been developed. Both qualitative and quantitative are currently available: while quantitative analysis is generally oriented to survey data, qualitative investigations rely on a variegated spectrum of methods, such as in-depth interviews, discourse and frame analysis, and participant observation (Polletta and Amenta 2001: 313). What this heterogeneous methods grasp is that emotional dynamics have a strong role in the process of *framing* the social reality. Emotions are viewed as producers of individual and collective identities and social meanings, through the role they play in the interpretation of the social and political reality. Within the notion of frame, it is argued, cognition is an important factor in

knowledge and, at the same time, in the construction of the social realm (Lakoff, 2008). Moreover, recent literature has shown the strong link between cognition and emotions: they have a cognitive role that operates in the process of *framing*, that is the interpretation and construction of reality.

In this vein, this study takes these developments into account and advances its own methodological path in order to approach the object of the study.

3. Emotions and discourse theory: some general ideas

These facets of the current research on the political role of emotions allow us to advance a theoretical proposal, which logically involves deep methodological assertions, as we sill argue below.

Overall, we advocate for a comprehensive and interpretive perspective, within a general anti-foundationalist framework, contrary to the rigid positivism of certain political analysis. According to this interpretive position, we reject the unconditional notion that the political world is fully independent of our knowledge of it. Rather, we contend that the world is, at least in part, socially and discursively constructed. That means that social phenomena are strictly dependent of our interpretation of them. In this sense, while the world clearly "exists" independently of any particular interpretation of it, the social realm is "discursively constructed", that is, its meaning and significance depend on particular discursive articulations. Discourses about the political realm, therefore, have both *representational* and *ontological* functions: discourse can be defined as a particular *way of talking about and understanding the world*, as well as a *way of socially constructing its meaning*. In this vein, following a nominalist vision – i.e. the experience of the world is not given to us directly but mediated by language –, we can suggest that it is our interpretation and understanding of political phenomena, that really matters.

Within this context, we will draw on some well-known assumptions recently developed by discourse theory, and particularly the Essex School. The discursive approach articulated by this intellectual tradition will allow us to properly deal with the theoretical problem that emotions, and their discursive translation within contentious practices, pose to the democratic realm. Here, we will focus on some main methodological vectors that assess core politics issues, such as the poststructuralist and discursive view of the *political*, the analytical tools for discourse analysis, the relationship between emotions and discourse and the key role played by the concept of populism.

3.1 Discourse theory and politics as struggle for the meaning

In recent decades a variety of paradigms has been developed under the unifying umbrella of discourse analysis (see Howarth, 2000). Here we will briefly present the theory of the so-called Essex School, in order to sketch our own research method.

Being one of the most influential approaches to discourse analysis, the perspective initially developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) is known to be the 'purest' poststructuralist theory, among different perspectives of discourse analysis – discursive psychology, critical discourse analysis, and so forth –, and the wide arrays of theoretical and analytical approaches that have recently highlighted the importance of 'discourse' within political research (Torfing, 1999; Glynos *et. al.,* 2009). Their starting point is that reality can be grasped and understood within discourses, so that it is discourse itself that is taken as the object of analysis. Epistemologically based on the poststructuralist idea that discourse constructs meaning in the social world, the purpose of political and discursive research is not to get 'behind' discourse. On the contrary, the analyst has to work identifying the social

consequences of different discursive representations of reality. Furthermore, due to the fundamental instability of language, the meanings of social domain cannot be fixed, and they are constantly being transformed through contact with other discourse practices. In this context, the term 'discourse' is not identical to language or text; rather it refers to a network of meaning articulating by both linguistic and non-linguistic elements. Discourse refers to all "systems of meaningful practices that form the identities of subjects and objects" (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 3-4), which are constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity. Thus, discourse and language are not transparent and neutral, rather they inform the social construction of reality and are socio-politically 'situated'.

Consequently, the Essex discourse theory refers to the scientific practice of grasping, mapping, and accounting for the discursive articulations that attempt to fix the meaning within the political realm. In this process, it combines two interrelated tasks: on the one hand a process of capturing the processes through which social meaning is articulated; on the other hand the mapping of antagonistic feature of different discourses in their articulation around specific nodal points (e.g. 'the people'). While the overall aim is to carrying out critical analysis of power relations, as well to articulate a normative perspective for social change, discourse theory shows that the meaning of social phenomena and entities are constantly involved in discursive struggles. Discursive struggle is, indeed, a keyword of the theory: discourses, it is argued, are engaged in a constant struggle over the creation of the meaning of the same social domain. What this struggle is aiming at is a – at least provisional – dominance of one particular meaning over others. This is what has been called hegemony.

3.1.1 Construction of the world and objectivity

Epistemologically, discourse theory is grounded in social constructivism: knowledge is linked to social processes and to historical and cultural contexts. Within this perspective, both the real world and the knowledge of it are to be grasped in discursive practices – all material and non-material elements of the political realm being viewed as properly discursive. Discourse itself is what constitutes the meaning of our world. Since discursive practices shape our understanding of the world – its very meaning – the same boundaries of objectivity are to be found within the different discourse practices. Their fluid and context-based features makes that objectivity something that can be contested, especially in the political realm. The allegedly objective understanding of the world is the *sedimented* vision, a result of political and discursive struggles. For this perspective, discourses are contingent visions of the social and political realm.

In this vein, Laclau and Mouffe try to go beyond the objectivism and essentialism of orthodox Marxism. For them, society is not constituted by objective laws, nor by fixed class divisions. Rather, the social realm is to be understood as our own attempt at give a meaning of existing phenomena through discursive processes. Thus, these attempts are what constitute the process that leads to objectivity. Objectivity, in this perspective, is produces through confrontation of alternative discursive interpretation of the world, until one vision is hegemonically naturalised. The naturalisation of a particular meaning is what the hegemonic discourse is aiming at, as well as the stabilisation of power relations. The production of meaning, in other words, natralise power relations and place them beyond question.

3.1.2 Analytical tools

Studying the political realm as constructed by discourses has different

methodological consequences. Epistemologically, the Essex School opens up a scientific space for political research beyond casual laws. Indeed, adopting a *problem-driven* approach to political analysis via the study of particular problems in specific historical contexts, discourse theory operates through a *logic of critical explanation* (Glyson and Howarth, 2007), that aims at evaluating and criticising discourse struggles. What is important to delve into here is that, firstly, discourse analysis problematizes its own object of study. That means that this approach is not a purely theory-driven approach that aims at vindicating a particular theory, but it starts from the definitions and construction of political problems. It is indeed a problem-drive approach, which does not take for granted the existence and nature of social structures and rules, but locates the problems in historical and ideational factors. Given these *ontological* premises, the formal approach to discourse is in this sense what permits its flexible utilization in the analysis of concrete cases, allowing a rigorous theoretical and comparative usage. The central concepts introduced by Laclau and Mouffe in the study of discursive practices are, among others, articulation, elements, moments, nodal points and empty signifiers.

Articulation is invoked by Laclau and Mouffe primarily to understand concrete social practices in which social actors 'articulate' discursive elements along the axes of what they call equivalence or difference. Moments, for their part, are the different positions that appear articulated within a discourse (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 105). In this sense, articulation refers to the signifying mechanism through which elements are continually transformed to moments of distinct discourses fixing – at least temporarily – their meaning, through the structuring function of the nodal point, which later Laclau conflates into the notion of 'empty signifier'. Within this formal configuration, the articulation of a political discourse takes place around empty signifiers: emptiness is, from this perspective, not only an essential formal quality of discourses as such, but a condition for discursive struggles. Since discourses tend to fill such emptiness, they are in an 'articulatory' struggle for the 'matter' of these empty

signifiers.

How does this struggle occur? Laclau and Mouffe argue that in the discursive struggle over the significance of the political realm, weight has to be given to two different logics: the logic of *equivalence* and the logic of *difference.* They are two distinct logics through which the representation of social space is formed. The logic of equivalence is an operation of simplification of the political domain, while the logic of difference is a mechanism of expansion of the complexity of the world. (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 130). These logics capture the two basic possibilities in the process of *framing* the reality and construction of political identities.

In this sense, identities, both individual and collective – being an example of empty signifiers – are the results of discursive struggles. It is important to note that all the approaches to discourse analysis are critical of the classical Western understanding of the individual as an autonomous subject. According to Laclau and Mouffe (1985), the subject – both individual and collective – is not determined by economic and material factors, but it acquires its identity by being *represented* discursively. The idea of the true, whole self is a fiction, a myth (Laclau, 1977: 2). Like the social, the individual is partly structured by discourses, but the structuring is never total. The subject has different identities according to those discourses of which it forms part, and is always *relationally* organized. In this sense, the subject is *fragmented.* In particular, identity is discursively constituted through *chains of equivalence* where signs are sorted and linked together in chains in opposition to other chains, which thus define how the subject is, and how it is not. Therefore, a given identity is *contingent* – that is, possible but not necessary.

One might argue that Laclau and Mouffe do not add much empirical evidence to their discourse theory. But that does not imply that their theory, concepts and methods cannot be used in detailed empirical analyses. It is important to

note that recently there has been a significant increase in the concrete applications of this framework, often perceived as over-theoretical (e.g. Howarth, Norval and Stavrakakis 2000; Howarth and Torfing 2005). Indeed, through the usage of building methodological units, scholars have collected and analysed a variegated amount of 'data', such as "speeches, reports, manifestos, historical events, interviews, policies, ideas, even organisations and institutions" (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 4).

3.2 Discourse and the affective dimension

Within the process of *framing*, discourses are the vectors through which political is structured. The different analytical tools developed and employed by the Essex School – such as articulations, elements, moments, nodal points and empty signifiers – are the theoretical mechanisms through which political analysis can grasp this discursive construction of reality. However, one might ask what is this construction composed of? Concepts, ideas, ideologies, beliefs, and affects are all significant elements that take part in this process. Recently, as we have already mentioned, great attention has been given to the affective, emotional side of this process. What about emotion within the discourse theory? How are emotion and affectivity articulated with a discursive logic? And how is this articulation linked to democracy?

Some criticisms have been raised towards the effective possibility for the Essex School and the formal theory it has suggested to grasp the importance of affect (e.g. Beasley-Murray, 2010). Although Laclau has admitted himself that the topic of emotions have not previously been incorporated into discourse theory, or at most in a "sketchy and inchoate way" (Laclau 2003: 278), he has also highlighted that it should be seen not as a threat that contradict discourse theory, but as an internal challenge for additional theoretical refinement and analytical improvement. In this sense, it is noteworthy the fact that discourse

theory has suggested a series of useful methodological instruments to capture the emotional aspect of identity formation. If the general idea is to register the 'linguistic' and 'constructivist' turn in the social sciences, the attempt is to take into account the ways in which discursive articulations depends on processes of affective investment. Recent developments within the domain of discourse theory have been engaging seriously with this problematic (e.g. Stavrakakis 2005; 2014a), thus taking on board the so-called 'affective turn'.

Putting emphasis on the emotional dynamics that are related particularly to populism has enabled Laclau to start addressing a series of significant shortcomings in his earlier account of the phenomenon. Interestingly enough, the dimension of affective investment becomes a central value of Laclau's late analysis of populism. Through the notion of radical investment he adds a peculiar perspective to his own discursive theory of populism. He indeed argues that "an entity becomes the object of an investment – as in being in love, or in hatred – the investment belongs necessarily to the order of affect" (Laclau 2005a: 110). In this vein, since such investment is necessary in order to effect the symbolic unification of a group in a formation such as 'the people' (Laclau 2005a: 110), then affect becomes a nuclear element of a discursive analysis of populism[11].

It has been empirically demonstrated, for instance, that the differentiation between a technocratic and a populist government lies in the 'emotional' perceptions they provoke amongs citizens: the former is often seen as neutral, passive, distant, and essentially 'dry' in its institutional nature, while the latter is viewed as warm, passionate, affective and close in its discursive articulation. It is in this vein that the role of particular emotions has been studied within populist phenomena. Nicolas Demertzis has focused, for instance, on the role of *resentment* in populism, arguing that it is defined as political phenomenon

[11] Laclau suggests that the figure of the leader emerges as one possible, even though partial, object of radical investment (Laclau 2005a: 192).

precisely because it is 'charged with *resentment*' (Demertzis, 2006: 112; Demertzis, 2013). Mouffe's case is, for its part, even more revealing insofar she has been underlying the important role of emotion and the dimension of affectivity throughout all her research. She has particularly insisted on the removal – if not the repression – of affectivity and the passions in contemporary liberal democratic theory (Mouffe, 2000: 30), and defended from an agonistic position the role of affects and the passions in politics. For Mouffe thinking of politics somehow entails thinking of passion. This is so, in her view, not only because politics arise out of passions, but also because politics – that is partisan politics in the Schmittian perspective she works from – at the same time moderates, mobilizes, intensifies friend/enemy distinctions. Moreover, in both *On the Political* (2005) and *Agonistics* (2013), the focus on the role of emotions sustains this argument, with and additional engagement with the analysis of identification processes. Passions define and substantially enlighten democratic practice, because they represent the type of (necessary) bonds that have to develop among democratic citizenries; that is, passions are all those affective identifications – practices and discourses – that constitute collectivities and unite citizenries. Seen as collective and politically necessary, passions ground democratic practice.

4. People and populism between theory and discourse

Given this context, here we delve into the study of populism, which is a central aspect of discourse theory, and directly related to the affective dimension of politics. It is important to note that, being one of the most commented concept in recent political studies, populism has been conceptualized through different approaches: populism as a particular form of political organization (e.g. Germani, 1978; Taggart, 1995), populism as a political style (Canovan, 1999; Mazzoleni *et.al.*, 2003; Taguieff, 1995), populism as a 'thin-centred ideology' (e.g. Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008b; Mudde, 2004; 2007; Stanley, 2008) or

'discourse' (Laclau, 2005). All different understandings of the term populism tend to be broad and vague, even in the academic debates. However, almost all these authors have focused on searching for *minimal* definition of populism. Locating such a common core is, certainly, the holy grail of all theories of populism. The question is where exactly is this to be located: In ideological content, the organizational features of populist movements, or in political rhetoric and practices? In this attempt, it has been argued that populism is as *a thin-centred ideology* that has three core concepts – the people, the elite, the general will – and two direct opposites – elitism and pluralism, and can be attached to other 'thicker' ideologies (e.g. liberalism, socialism, nationalism, etc.). In this sense populist politics considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the people' and 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* of the people (Mudde, 2004: 543; 2007: 23; Mudde and Rovira, 2012: 8). According to Cas Mudde, populism is first and foremost a *moral* form of politics, as the distinction between 'the elite' and 'the people' is mainly based on moral principles – such as the pure politicians versus the corrupts politics, a particular kind of Manichean discourse that identifies Good with a unified will of the people and Evil with a conspiring elite.

Regardless of the approach one chooses, what becomes clear is that populism focuses on the 'who' of politics. In so doing, it contends that 'the people' is the true subject of democratic politics. According to Ben Stanley (2008), four interrelated ideas represent the core values of populism, and represent the lowest common denominator that all populist phenomena share:

1. The existence of two homogeneous units of analysis: 'the people' and 'the elite'.
2. The antagonistic relationship between the people and the elite.
3. The idea of popular sovereignty.
4. The positive valorisation of 'the people' and denigration of 'the elite'.

1. Populism is articulated in a particular vision of the political in which the division between 'the people' and 'the elite' plays a fundamental part in its rhetoric. In this sense, the complexity of society is undervalued. Moreover, the same concept of 'the people' is somehow 'decontested' and its conceptual ambiguity contributes the ontological perception of the society as essentially divided between the people's will and, on the opposite front, the elite.

2. Dealing with the division between 'the people' and 'the elite', Stanley highlights the fact that the essential nature of the relationship between these two entities is their antagonistic and adversarial relationship, regardless of the concrete structure and configuration of the elite itself. Recognizing the Schmittean legacy, it seems that populists subscribe their doctrine according to which political actions and motives can be reduced to the relationship between *friend* and *enemy*.

3. Margaret Canovan remarks that popular sovereignty is the 'foundation myth' of modern representative politics. The concept of 'we, the People' is somehow the source of political authority. Drawing on this Stanley argues that the popular *versus* elite antagonism plays an ideational rather than structural role in populism, and contributes to the simplification of the complex task of 'constructing' the people. Although there is no substantial content within the notion of the people – a part of its being constituted through the antagonic logic –, what remains a key factor is the idea of its essential role in democratic politics.

4. Furthermore, populism has an evaluative task in attributing different political and moral values to both 'the people' and 'the elite'. Similar to what Cas Mudde has argued, in this vision populism charges with positive moral significance the idea of 'the people', while it discredits those who belong to 'the elite'. Hence, the same idea of popular sovereignty is articulated as the

ultimate and truly essential normative principle for democratic government. In a 'decontested' manner, populism treats the general will of the people as if it could be somehow privileged over the elite, including over the representative role it often assumes.

In a similar vein, discourse theory has developed a powerful approach to populism, which shares some elements and critical allegations with this vision of populism as a thin-centred ideology. Through the utilization of these analytical tools and formal criteria, discursive theory has focused particularly on the analysis of some kinds of discourses, movements, and political identities – those articulated around the nodal point of 'the people'. Populism has been in this sense the main object of study and the terrain of application of discourse theory since the beginnings of this intellectual tradition (Laclau, 1977), further enhanced in his more recent work (Laclau, 2005a; 2005b) and still remains a key research horizon for those who operate within this theoretical framework (e.g. Panizza 2005; Stavrakakis, 2004; 2014b; Arditi, 2007).

Within the numerous definition of populism, discourse theory develops a particular approach in which the fundamental idea of populism is its logic, rather than its organizational or structural social features. Populism has been elaborated as a specific object of study, and the discursive framework has advanced a series of formal operational criteria, as we have seen, which have helped the understanding of differentiated political phenomena. The formalism suggested by the discourse research is indeed articulated around two theoretical assumptions: on the one hand, the nodal point – or empty signifier – 'the people' and, on the other hand, the antagonistic logic that divides the society into two main blocs along '*equivalential*' lines, the establishment versus the underdog, 'the people'. In a nutshell, populism is characterised by a political logic that considers society essentially divided into two opposed groups, 'the people' and 'the elite'. This division of society into

two antagonic camps is the result of a process: firstly, different social and political demands are linked together; this leads to the formation of a collective identity and the creation of a common enemy – the establishment –; and a consequent affective investment in the leader or political party that claims to represent 'the people'.

With the aim of going beyond the limitations of other existing approaches, this formalism permits the framing of a concept of 'populism' that is at once rigorous and flexible and thus apt to be used for both theoretical and empirical analysis. Concretely, this formalism helps to overcome an important problem: the geographical and political 'ubiquity' of populism. As Laclau has noted (Laclau 2005b: 44), populism can emerge from different points of the socio-economic structure, as well as be associated with radically different phenomena within the political spectrum, such as left-wing and right-wing movements and political parties (Laclau 2005b: 45).

> "[W]e could say that a movement is not populist because in its politics or ideology it presents actual contents identifiable as populistic, but because it shows a particular logic of articulation of those contents – whatever those contents are". (Laclau 2005b: 33).

It becomes clear that what Laclau is proposing is a *rigorously formal* approach. Thus, Laclau's viewpoint moves beyond the assessment of empirical contents – ideological, organizational, etc. – and focuses on form.

> "the concept of populism that I am proposing is a strictly formal one, for all its defining features are exclusively related to a specific mode of articulation – the prevalence of the equivalential over the differential logic – independently of the actual contents that are articulated. […] Most of the attempts at defining populism have tried to locate what is specific to it in a particular ontic content and, as a result, they have ended in a self-defeating exercise whose two predictable alternative results have been either to

> choose an empirical content which is immediately overflowed by an avalanche of exceptions, or to appeal to an 'intuition' which cannot be translated into any conceptual content". **(**Laclau, 2005b: 44)

The lastest works of Laclau, in this sense, further highlight the *formal* character of the populist logics, to the point that the core reference to the signifier 'the people' is replaced by the production of empty signifiers in general. In other words, populism as a mode of discursive articulation is no longer essentially linked to the location of 'the people', rather the populist dimensions can belong to all political articulations opposing dominant hegemonic blocs. What remains a key feature is the antagonistic dichotomisation of social space. However, it becomes evident that this view also involves some risks, as remarked by Yannis Stavrakakis (2004). If the empty signifier 'the people' somehow loses the core value it had in the previous analysis of Laclau, thus populism seems to become identical with politics *tout court*. Here, however, in his attempt to advance a strictly formal approach to populism, Laclau puts in danger the same usefulness of the concept for political analysis. Therefore, if any signifier can potentially become the nodal point of a populist discourse, "the risk here is to lose the conceptual particularity of populism as a tool for concrete political analysis" (Stavrakakis, 2004: 263).

All in all, beyond the reference to the structural location of 'the people' and its role within the analysis of populism, what becomes clear is that the Essex School's discourse analysis develops a fruitful approach to the study of the process of *framing* reality. We will further expand on these reflections in the subsequent chapters dedicated to the normative debates about the role of emotions in the democratic terrain. Here, we will develop our theoretical and methodological viewpoint, in the light of what we have argued up to now.

5. Emotions, discourse and populism: sketching our research

We have briefly outlined discourse theory as developed by the Essex School, which seems to be a good starting point to deal with the theoretical problem that emotions, and their discursive translation within contentious practices, pose to the democratic realm. It is through language that we give names to things and we comprehend phenomena. Conceptualizing political ideas and social phenomena, also, is what political theory has been doing throughout history**.**

Following a broad interpretive position (e.g. Bourdieu, 1991; Taylor, 1985) rather than explaining actions in light of casual laws or mechanisms available to the observer, we will give importance to the structuring role of language and linguistic practices. Believing that truth lies also in the eyes of the observer, the patterns of interest are not firmly rooted in nature, but they are the products of our making: ideologies, concepts, and discursive practices are the *loci* where we can find the social and political outcomes of emotions. As psychological and neurological analysis suggests, the internal psychological conflict – emotions, feelings, etc. – affects political reality through the force of belief systems. Both realms of experience – the psychological internal and the political external – infuse each other; each depends on the other. Where then to find the belief systems? Politically, they lie in language and discourses. This leads us to take into account the discursive level in which emotional factors are politically involved. That is, again, the meanings and interpretations of political concepts/categories: discursive struggles about the ways of fixing the meaning of signifiers like 'the people' and 'democracy', for instance, are central to explaining the political semantics of our contemporary political world, as well as the political role of emotions.

In this context, we believe that the contribution of discourse analysis – which has historically been linked, together with conceptual inquiries, to the conceptualization of power (e.g. Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Foucault, 1972; Koselleck and Presner, 2002) – can fit a theoretical investigation, helping to disclose the current discourse struggles over political concepts and ideas, as well as the emotional weight of this process. Hence, since the general aim is to explore the political role of emotions, it is on language and discourses that one should focus. Therefore, sketching a theoretical proposal on the political role played by emotions means combining a focus on the discursive struggle over the conceptual meaning with normative analysis about the role of emotions in politics, as has been outlined in the previous chapter. Drawing on contemporary social movement studies, populism and democratic theory, the aim is to show how a theoretical focus on emotions can enhance both the comprehension of contentious phenomena, and the concrete function emotions have in the process of framing political ideas.

More specifically, our view is that, as demonstrated by the broad field of studies taken into consideration in the previous chapter, emotions are not something that only occasionally explodes onto the political scene; rather they are central to politics itself. Emotions are key factors for power, both in its pursuit, its legitimation and its exercise. In this context, guided by these general assumptions, the arguments in the next chapters will bring together a focus on emotions – and some insights from the case study – with theories of democracy and populism. As we have already mentioned, we will focus on what we call the '*geometrical*' and '*evocative'* roles of emotions, in both framing political subjects and political concepts. In this context, discourse analysis has contributed to showing that concepts are not eternally fixed in their meaning, but are dependent to logically and culturally elaborated frameworks of interpretations. We contend that emotions operate at the discursive level in the formation of political identities, the creation of basic democratic bounds, and consolidation of democratic beliefs. Moreover, the

logic of this operation resonates well with the populist logic proposed by Ernesto Laclau (2005), and the discursive division of the political community into two antagonistic camps, "the people" and the hegemonic elite (Laclau, 2005a: 110). Similarly, we will argue that emotions have a role in the framing of some central political concepts, such as 'democracy' and 'the people'. Contributing to the latency and ideality of these terms, emotions take part in the constantly transformation of political ideas, in their being contested and ambiguous. If these political concepts are contested this is because, as Jason Frank has observed, "they are not….yet" (Frank, 2010: 5), they are, in other words, empty signifiers. Emotions let us see this *vacuum* and, at once, are somehow the concrete ways of *filling* them. It is through emotional factors that citizens give sense to the 'who' and 'what' of democracy.

As we have already mentioned, we argue that a combination of discourse analysis and democratic and populist theory represents a fruitful way in the comprehension of the role of emotions in politics.

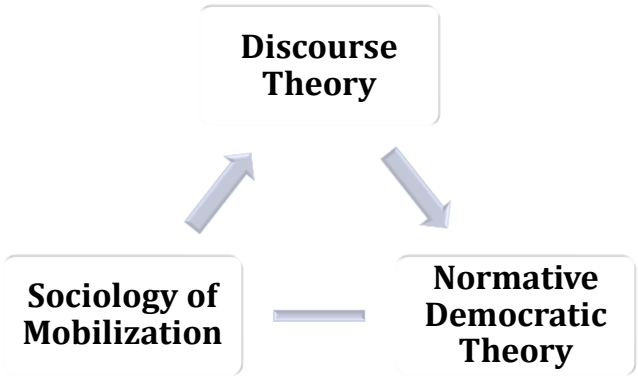

Figure 3.1 Link between different theoretical approaches.

Given this context, in this research we will combine two theoretical standpoints. On the one hand, through the case study – as we will outline below – the idea is to somehow 'register' the function of emotions and their

discursive vectors in the essential contestability of political concepts and ideas. On the other hand, and in the light of what this 'mapping' of emotions and discourse suggests, we will focus on the normative thinking on the role and place to be given to emotions. Going beyond the pure normative perspective – generally employed by scholars operating within the liberal paradigms – this conjunction opens up fascinating ways of analysis that can complement both theoretical and empirical investigations.

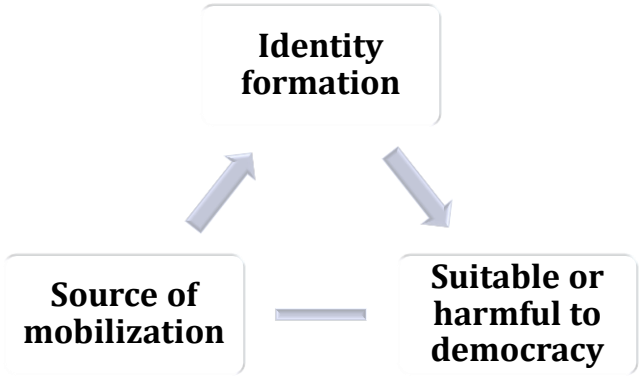

Figure 3.2 Different conceptualization of the role of emotions, corresponding to the different field of analysis.

5.1 Emotions and anti-austerity mobilizations: filling the empty signifiers?

Given this context, while we take into account the global context of these protests, we will pay particular attention to the discursive level of anti-austerity mobilizations that have characterized the Spanish political environment in recent years, particularly between 2011 and 2014. By focusing on the discourse level, the aim is to 'register' the role of emotions in the essential contestability of political concepts – especially those related to the idea and practice of democracy – and thus to suggest concrete ground for the theoretical reflection we will develop on populism and democratic theory.

Although it has been remarked that the heterogeneous phenomena labelled as 'anti-austerity' – such as the 15-M movement, the *Indignados*, the *mareas*, and *marchas* – lacked a coherent and homogeneous ideological cohesion (Prentoulis and Thomassen, 2013), they still bring to the forefront significant political elements, such as their critiques and questioning character of the current state of affairs and, as we will show, the articulation of emotional dynamics in both their critique and proposition of an alternative political discourse. To uncover these emotional vectors, we have focused especially on a range of discourses that characterized the protests and mobilizations taken into consideration, and were concretely expressed in manifestos, slogans, and the various activities of street occupation and protest. Moreover, we consider some key discursive aspects that are particularly representative of the protests and that were present all over the different phases of the movements.

However, although this research has been informed by previous work in protest event analysis, as well as by existing heterogeneous methods, this study does not exclusively aim at an in-depth analysis of these phenomena. Since the aim is not a study of the discursive level as such, but to delve into the connection between the discourse analysis with theoretical consideration about the role of emotions in democracy, we will not explore these phenomena nor will we give a complete and comprehensive picture of them. Therefore, aiming to advance in a theory-driven approach, we see the relevance of this case study to be twofold, according to the assumptions we will underscore. (1) In regard to the discursive horizon, it represents a remarkable example of the employment of emotional semantic in politics; (2) Hence, it is an expression of the foundational role of emotions for what concerns the redefinition and contention of central political categories, such as 'the people', and 'democracy'.

From an analytical point of view, one might doubt that the anti-austerity mobilizations that originated in the aftermath of the financial crisis are a form

of populism. One has to be aware, in first instance, that under the label of 'anti-austerity' fits different kind of events and movements, and anti-austerity protests are clearly different from the institutionalized political parties that have originated from these phenomena. Even more importantly, one has to carefully consider that many authors have highlighted, in the wake of Laclau, that to ask oneself if a movement is or is not populist is to start with the wrong question. The right question to ask would be, instead, to what extent is a movement – or a political party – populist? (Laclau 2005b: 45). From this point of view, it could seem that populism is inherently implicit within politics, and therefore becomes identical with it. The presence of the empty signifier 'the people' would lose the centrality it had in determining the essence of populism, while the unique defining feature would be the antagonistic logic of politics. Despite this theoretical statement, we draw on Stavrakakis (2004) and argue to the contrary that the reference to 'the people' remains crucial as a defining condition for populism, and given its presence within anti-austerity mobilizations, we can affirm that we are dealing with a specific form of populism. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that both categories of 'the people' and 'the elite' are *empty signifiers*, and that the concrete meaning of these political subjects is articulated through discursive tools.

All in all, the common rhetoric of recent anti-austerity protest movements is based on anti-elitism, anti-establishment discourse, and the centrality of the people against those who are perceived as corrupting the original meaning of democracy: the power of the people. Consequently, the claim for "the people" is related to another conceptual and discursive struggle: the very definition of democracy. Its meaning and its legitimacy are undeniably at stake. These contentious practices represent an immanent critique of the contemporary forms of economic and political power, and a symptom of the declining legitimacy of political and economic institutions. Therefore, stressing its significant relevance in the current situation as well as its use of emotional vectors, we will aim to highlight the fundamental role of emotions in politics,

particularly when it concerns the creation of the political subject – such as 'the people' – as well as the definition of legitimacy and democracy. If, on the other hand, the ideal of democracy is obviously complex and contested, as are its justifications and practical implications, then highlighting the transformation of concepts through emotional dynamics in current political phenomena can help to give a practical horizon to research in political theory.

Understood as a perceptible example of the role of emotions in politics, anti-austerity mobilization can be seen as an example of the contemporary vectors through which the struggle for popular and democratic legitimacy is currently led. They somehow represent an attempt to fill the *empty signifiers* of popular sovereignty and democracy. Ideas and concepts are thus involved daily in discursive struggles for the meaning, and showing its relevance and implications would shed light on broader political consequences, as well as would contribute to the normative debate about the relationship between populism and democracy itself.

6. Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the wide epistemological implications of the social and political study of emotions. Dealing with the emotional dimension of a political phenomenon involves taking into account – at least to start with – the broad scientific fields it is linked to. As we have showed, during past decades, the social sciences have developed numerous paradigms of interpretation for the role of emotions in politics, and have put special emphasis on the role of emotions in the process of framing the reality. Indeed, what the review of the heterogeneous fields and methods on the study of emotions has revealed is that affective dynamics are considered as producers of individual and collective identities and social meanings. In this context, emotions are seen to

have some essential and intrinsic dimensions: *cognitive, evaluative, sensitive,* and *motivational*.

We have then turned to the methodological proposal of this study, and explained the different methods that are combined in it. We have argued that discourse analysis and theoretical inquiry about the link between populism and democracy will be at the centre of the research. In this sense, we have briefly taken into account the approach to populism developed by the so-called Essex School, and drawing on it, we have outlined our own approach. We are aware that a combination of discursive analysis and normative thinking can both have advantages and entail some perils. If on the one hand it risks a lack of analytical rigour, on the other hand, we aim at enhancing what we consider an excessive methodological rigidity in the study of politics. As we have seen, heterogeneous perspectives have been overlapping in the theorising the role of emotions in politics. Drawing on the methodological assumption we have stressed, this study advances some propositions for a theoretical and cross-disciplinary inquiry, in which emotions are viewed not simply as another set of variables but as crucial components of concrete struggles for the meaning of political categories.

The relevance of a theoretical investigation on emotions, as we will show throughout the following parts of the dissertation, lies firstly in the understanding of their broad role in the political conceptualization and framing. As well, beyond their historical and theoretical relevance, focusing on emotion will allow to highlight the current discursive struggles for the meaning of reality. Studying emotions in political disciplines, we will demonstrate, equips social scientists and theorists with useful theoretical tools to grasp the profound problems of the legitimization of politics (Lakoff, 2008: 8). In the next chapter we will start focusing on the case study, dealing firstly with the literature on protest movements, and linking it to the discursive level of recent anti-austerity mobilizations.

Chapter 4. Social and protest movements in times of austerity (I): between strategies, identity, and emotions

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, dealing with the wide epistemological implications of social and political research on emotions, we have outlined our methodological framework. Here, we will move on considering the ways in which social sciences have considered collective action, and its particular relationship to the dichotomy between reason/emotion. In accordance with our aim and the methodological guidelines – and before focusing on the emotional rhetoric and its conceptual implications in the recent anti-austerity protest movements – we will pay our attention to the explanation of collective behaviour and social mobilization, and especially to the relationship between protest movements analysis and emotion.

We will then offer a brief picture of the contending frameworks of analysis for the comprehension and explanation of collective mobilization. Mapping the various ways of scientific approaches to social and protest movements is a useful operation in order to outline the complex scenery of studies that have been developed in an attempt to grasp the political nature of social movements. After considering the different theoretical paradigms, we will then delve into the case of recent anti-austerity movements, putting particular emphasis on some discursive elements. Needless to say, we will not give an

exhaustive picture of the phenomenon[12]. It is not our purpose, nor does it add to our study, which rather attempts to link these discursive-emotional analyses with a broader theoretical reflection.

2. Explaining collective action

Social and political sciences have made collective mobilization into a specific scientific field that has assumed important epistemological status within the discipline in last decades (Ruggiero & Montagna, 2008). The field of social movement studies is extremely broad, and this thesis cannot possibly do justice to every significant trend, neither is it its purpose. However, it is important to note that scholars working on social and protest movements have focused particularly on answering a series of interrelated questions, such as, among others: What is a social or protest movement? How does a movement rise up and grow? What are the standards of organization and strategies of contention? How can social science explain these phenomena? What role do social and protest movements play within the political and democratic domain? In this context, the core of the growing literature in recent years has focused on the organizational, ideational, and cultural complexity of social and protest movements, especially highlighting the structures, ideas, repertoires, aims and goals movements represent.

At the outset, addressing the issue of collective action means admitting two basic problematic concerns. First, the concepts of protest and social movements are somewhat ambiguous. It is not axiomatic to define what a social movement is, differentiating it from other political actors such as

[12] There is a wide literature on the mobilizations known as 15-M or the *Indignados*. Both scholars and activists have developed a conspicuous amount of analyses. See, for instance, Artal (2011), Dhaliwal (2012), Entine and Moissand (2011), Errejón (2011; 2013), Errejón and Mouffe (2015), Monedero (2012), Romanos (2013), Subirats (2011), Taibo (2011; 2012), Velasco (2011).

political parties or interest groups (Diani, 1992). The difficulties derive from the diversity of objectives of such movements, as well as the same difficulty in establishing the boundaries between them and other forms of political action (Pérez Ledesma, 1994: 158). The same reasoning can be made for the concept of "protest", which is clearly only one of the different possibilities for political action that social movements have. Even though protests can be defined as "sites of contestation in which bodies, symbols, identities, practices, and discourses are used to pursue or prevent changes in institutionalized power relations" (Taylor and van Dyke 2004: 268), their contours as object of inquiry are not simple to define and can cause analytical problems.

Thus, the second problematic element becomes evident: the plurality and the heterogeneity of social and protest movements, which means that under the category of social movements we can find the most disparate phenomena. Additionally, there is disagreement regarding the inclusion or not of certain collective protest actions. When authors speak of social movements they are referring, for example, to the labour movement, to pacifist, ecologist, the antinuclear movements, feminist movements, and so forth. According to this view, other phenomena such as human rights movement, the movement for sexual liberation, the movement for the defence of minorities, and the mobilizations for the rights of homosexuals can be considered other contemporary examples of social movements (Laraña and Gusfield, 1994). The reflections about the conceptual meaning of social movements would certainly deserve to be explored, but it exceeds the scope and aims of this chapter. What is clear is that the idea of social movements is related to a broad, plural and heterogeneous concept of collective action.

In this chapter we explore the theoretical frameworks on social and protest movements that have been developed in recent decades. We will stress two aspects related to the study of social movements and protest. First (paragraph 2), we highlight the importance that their study has assumed for political

science and social studies as a whole. In this sense we will emphasise the different scientific approaches that have been developed in the past decades. We will also show the relevance and purpose of different research perspectives, their arguments and their respective critiques. Also, we will stress the place and role that emotions (and the reason-emotion divide) have been given within the different explanatory paradigms of collective action. Moreover, we will highlight the theoretical and practical challenges that social movements – particularly those that have arisen after the last global crisis – pose to the political system (paragraph 3). In this sense, the social mobilization that originated in the aftermath of the financial crisis is an important example of deeply *political* questions that collective action brings to the forefront. The focus of the analysis will be the critique that these phenomena pose to the conventional liberal democratic model and its close ties to the financial world, as well as the variegated proposal of alternative models of democracy related to the last wave of mobilization. The goal is twofold: to provide an overview of the state of affairs, mentioning the features of different scientific paradigms – thus, settling the basis of our own theory –, and to show the proper theoretical challenges that social movements unveil within contemporary politics.

As with any map of a field, ours is not exhaustive and necessarily excludes some nuances. Nonetheless, outlining the research on social movement studies and its links with democratic theory is an essential step towards achieving the objective of our study.

3. Paradigms of social movement analysis

It is now important to briefly lay the different paradigms and the plurality of approaches that have shaped the theoretical development in he broad field of social and protest movement studies. Approaching the study of social and protest movements, we should start by mentioning the two general visions

that have dominated the study of mobilization in the recent scholarship – the traditions that founded the *myth* of social movement studies according to Cristina Flesher Fominaya and Laurence Cox (2013). In the first half of the twentieth century, and even in the immediate post-World War II years, social movements, it is told, were generally associated with irrational action. From this perspective, collective action was interpreted as an emotional response to a given social situation, and it was located outside political institutions, and standard political strategies – this being the favourite object of research in the behaviourist social sciences. In this context, theories based on the masses – known as *crowd* theories – were the dominant trend in social research on mobilization until the 1960s. The author who produced the most influential formulation, Gustave Le Bon described the crowds as impulsive, irritable, and suggestible. Given these characteristics, the masses are susceptible to the emotional appeals of demagogues. In this light, emotions were considered the engine of all political action that occurred outside conventional institutions, and most social scientists of the early and mid-twentieth century, among other, Weber, Durkheim and Freud, adopted some version of the vision of Le Bon. Conversely – perhaps as a complement to this vision of masses – in the second half of the twentieth century the rational choice paradigm spread out its influence over the different scientific approaches, including the study of social movements. Mancur Olson, in his *The Logic of Collective Action* (1971), by applying the principles of microeconomics to collective action, described the social actors as rational. According to him, individuals act and engage in politics, participating in trade unions and social movements, only if they obtain a personal advantage that would not be possible otherwise. In the absence of personal "incentives", Olson argues, rational individuals would not get involved, nor take part actively in collective actions. It is true that Olson acknowledges the existence of moral and emotional factors in collective agency, but he only does so in order to exclude them from his model based on the fact that it is not possible to obtain empirical evidence of the motivation behind the actions of a person.

Within this broad context, it is possible to place the main theories about social movements. Besides the approach that emerged under the influence of microeconomics, and the paradigm of rational choice, there are two major visions through which the research on collective action is divided. The first one is known as the "American" paradigm that insists on the role of movements as strategic actors, emphasizing the resources for mobilization and the interactions with the institutions. The second one, the "European" tradition, which focuses mainly on the process of historical development of post-industrial society, aims to show the identitarian and cultural factors within collective actions. Both perspectives developed prolific research paradigms that inspired many others, offering answers to the increased activity of social movement in the second half of the 20th century. Given this sociocultural context, the European tradition emphasized the structural aspects of social classes – influenced by a heterodox version of Marxism –, while the American approach mainly focused on how social movements raise, mobilize and organize themselves following the theory of collective behaviour (Laraña and Gusfield, 1994).

Despite the various criticisms of simplification this general vision receives (Flesher Fominaya & Cox, 2013)[13], two things are worth noting. The first one is that, beyond the stereotypical classification of paradigms, today the approaches span the entire scientific spectrum and are mixed in cross-disciplinary perspectives: organisational and political structures, identity, grievances, frames analysis, and emotions are some of the many elements related to social movements. The second important aspect that deserves to be underlined is that the development of the main contemporary paradigms on

[13] Flesher Fominaya and Cox state that near-identical account of how the discipline came into being. A tale, they say, that stress "the bad old days of collective behaviour theory, followed by the rise of resource mobilization theory, the addition of political opportunity structure, the encounter with ('European') 'new social movement' theory and the arrival of framing theory" (Flesher Fominaya and Cox, 2013: 7).

collective action have been closely linked to the concrete evolution of movements themselves[14]. The mobilizations of 1968, the new social movements in the 1980s, as well as the more recent Global Justice Movement and anti-austerity protests have all been accompanied by theoretical reflection.

3.1 Movements as strategic agents

For over thirty years, particularly in the American context, the dominant paradigm in the study of social movements was the resource mobilization theory (Tilly, 1978), which later developed into the political processes theory (McAdam *et. al.*, 2001; Tarrow, 1998). This approach was characterized by a pragmatic view of social phenomena, in contrast to conceptualizations of social movements as irrational occurrences. In early contributions in this vein, American sociologists in the 1970s defined social movements as rational and organized actors. Collective actions derive, according to this perspective, from a calculation of the costs and benefits, and constitute an extension of the conventional forms of politics. On the basis of the theory of resource mobilization there are two clear principles, linked to the broader rationalist perspective of the social sciences: 1) the idea that the activities that the social movements perform are not spontaneous nor disorganized; and 2) the idea that those individuals involved in social mobilizations are not unreasonable people (Ferree, 1994: 151).

[14] Interestingly enough, Flesher Fominaya and Cox (2013) have, indeed, noted that the foundations of European social and political theory are closely linked to social movements: Saint-Simon, Marx, De Tocqueville, Weber and Durkheim were all politically engaged with or against movements – as utopian socialist, movement theorist, the American Revolution, etc., and engaged with theorising popular collective agency. More recent social theorists such as Herbert Marcuse, Michel Foucault, Raymond Williams, Claus Offe, Pierre Bourdieu, Ulrich Beck, and Manuel Castells were similarly shaped by, and shaped, the political movements they observed or took part in.

The *Resource Mobilisation* approach stressed the importance of social movements' formal institutions (social movement organisations), micro-structural processes, material resources and tactics as preconditions to the emergence and development of a movement. Hence, it is clear from the outset that the analysis is focused primarily on the organization of the collective action. Roughly speaking, the resource mobilization theory argues that social movements are the result of perfectly rational collective behaviour, with very precise and defined objectives. The actors engage in social movements following their interests, helped by organizational structure of movements, which enables the mobilization of collective resources on which action is founded. Furthermore, at the core of this theory lies the argument that social movements act through strategies of mobilization and resource acquisition (mainly human and organizational), which are deliberately selected to reach their goals. Thus, it is possible to recognize a logical-instrumental vision of social movements, and the theory of resource mobilization suggests the existence of well-defined causal chains. A series of variables were favoured in the explanations of social movements: external circumstances and factors, such as alliances with political elites, the ability for obtaining financial and material resource (McCarthy and Zald, 1977); as well as structural variables, such as the decrease in state repression (Tilly, 1978), or the crisis of the state (Skocpol, 1979).

Moreover, from the '80s this approach was extended by another similar paradigm, the *Political Opportunity Structure*. Both perspectives have been focusing on determining what features of the political system enable or hinder the development of social movements, stressing particularly the importance of organisations and political structure. Collective action arises, according to the latter approach, thanks to specific "political opportunities" which can leverage social groups to start a movement in a given socio-political context. This theory states that the emergence of a social movement is linked to the changes and the transformations in the political structure that put the regime in a

situation of vulnerability. Structures or political opportunities are manifold and can range from higher or lower likelihood of participation, the tendency of state coercion, institutional forms, etc. In this context, scholars working in these paradigms stressed that social movements were not a marginal phenomenon in society. Indeed, they showed that social movements were more likely to emerge under conditions of structural stability, social connectedness and favourable mobilisation of resources. Importantly, protesters were redeemed by their image of alienated deviants. Quite on the contrary, they came to be characterised as rational actors, intent upon weighting costs and benefits of participation.

In spite of these important theoretical and social merits, these approaches were subject to criticisms from a number of different standpoints. Neither approaches attributed much interest to the causes that led to the appearance of movements, nor to their ideological features. In this sense, the main criticisms that have been formulated precisely insist on their exclusive attention to the organization, as well as on their relative neglect of other factors such as individual and collective identity. In particular, the economic language used to describe social movements typical of the resource mobilisation approach and the almost exclusive focus upon structural and organisational elements left many students of social movements dissatisfied (McAdam et al., 2001). Indeed, critics pointed out various shortcomings: the fact that these approaches were based on the theory of rational choice, overstating the rationality of collective action (Jasper, 1997: 33-37); the vagueness of concepts such as resource and opportunities; the absence of cultural dynamics, due to their structural biases; and the absence of emotional dynamics in the study of social movements (Goodwin, et. al., 2001).

3.2 Movements between identity, emotions, and framing

During the 1980s, new social and protest movements challenged collective action theorists. The environmental movement, the antinuclear movement, mobilizations in defence of the rights of homosexuals, alongside the development of already known phenomena such as gender equality and religious and cultural movements, represented a turning point for social scientists. The heterogeneous growth of social movements contributed to a revision of the conceptual and methodological tools being employed.

It is usually told that in Europe, the weight of the Marxist tradition did not favour the development of approaches based on the ratio *cost/benefit* as it happened in the American context. While Americans focused on analysing the instrumentality of social action, Europeans turned their attention towards the processes of identity formation and intersubjective communication (Foweraker, 1995). According to this, it has been highlighted that the new movements differed from previous expressions of dissent because they were not only concerned with claims of economic redistribution (Offe, 1985). Rather, the authentic – although implicit – horizon of the political struggles was the overall system of meaning, which sets dominant rules in a given society (Touraine, 1981: 29). The analysis of the new social movements was thus accompanied by renewed attention to concepts such as identity (Melucci, 1982; 1995), morality and ideology. Indeed, European studies have placed greater emphasis on cultural aspects and collective identity, developing what is known as the new social movements paradigm (NSM) (Touraine, 1981; Laraña & Gusfield 1994; Offe, 1992). Alberto Melucci, in this sense, characterizes these new social movements as diverting the central interest from traditional class-struggle approach towards the cultural and symbolic terrain. In particular, the notion of identity had a prominent theoretical role in

the analysis of the new social movements (Melucci, 1996; Touraine, 1981; cf. McAdam et al., 2001). The formation of a collective identity was seen as essential to the assignation of common meanings to events. Melucci (1996) defined collective identity as "an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals (or groups at a more complex level) and concerned with the orientations of action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place" (Melucci, 1996: 44).

Unlike what theorists of collective action had been highlighting in previous paradigms, the vision of the NSM tends to take on some distinctive features. In the first instance, it has been shown that there is no obvious nor structural relationship between the roles of participants in social movements, being these characterized by a variegated number of ideas and values. Secondly, it has been pointed out that claims usually have a very strong cultural and symbolic character, and demands are often related to the issues of identity. Furthermore, there is a dynamic relationship between the individual and the collective dimensions the paradigm of NSM draws attention on. It is noteworthy that this approach stresses that the nature of new social movements' claims are not quantitative – as it could be the redistribution of wealth, in the traditional class struggle vision –, rather they are qualitative demands, such as calling for the recognition of different cultural, sexual, and religious identities, and so forth. In the last decades, different trends of analysis emerged with the aim of integrating this main interpretive model, favouring the emergence of new methodological and analytical perspectives, such as, among others, the *frame analysis*, and the focus on emotions.

The *frame analysis* (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995) can be seen as part of the "cultural turn" that characterized the sociology of collective action from the 1980s. This view claims the centrality of cultural and symbolic dimensions in social movements, including ideal factors, symbolic resources and ideological schemes. It belongs to the constructivist approach within social sciences,

which considers the collective action as producer of political identities and social meanings, through its symbolic interpretation of the political reality. In this sense, this perspective puts special emphasis on the cultural and political process of construction of meaning. When applied to the study of social movements, the framing approach is aimed at examining the "struggle over the production of mobilizing and countermobilizing ideas and meanings" (Benford & Snow, 2000: 613), by placing social movements as active agents in the formation of these ideas and meanings.

This approach focuses on how participants in social movements actively and interactively construct shared frames that filter and organise information about the social realm. Thus, this perspective combines structural, psychological and cultural elements that lead to mobilisation (Snow, 2004). Culture and ideology therefore may shape the kinds of frames movement activists adopt (Benford & Snow, 2000). *Frames*, thus, refers to a sum of social and political beliefs that operate creating the common horizon for the interpretation of reality and the creation of a collective identity and action. In a sense, framing flows into ideology (Jasper, 1997: 157). Social movements articulate frames as much as they may make use of them as resources in mobilization, in that activists make sense of their own protests through already existing narrative frames (Eyerman 2002).

All this operates through a "symbolic packaging", converting the frames into the relatively coherent narrative of movement. According to Gamson (1992), within the framing process there are three basic components: The logic of identity, which creates the division of social identities – us *versus* them – and therefore gives birth to the collective action; the sentiment of injustice, which is the basic operation through which individuals and collectives problematize a social issue; the logic of motivation: the idea that the situation of injustice can be transformed through a collective action.

The cultural turn in social movement studies is also linked to a renewed interest in the emotional processes implied in collective and political actions (e.g. Goodwin *et al.* 2001; Jasper, 2011). While before the 1970s, individuals involved in an insurgent crowd were seen as prey of instinctual and destructive emotions, new and different approaches to the collective action recognized that societies are composed of conflicting values and alternative structures of feeling. The rationalistic vision of previous approaches, in other words, was transformed into a more genuine interest for emotional dynamics. The aim of this variegated corpus of literature has been of, on the one hand, to confer the scientific legitimacy on research dedicated to emotions and, on the other hand, to contribute to a new perception of emotions within social movements. Indeed, recent advancement in social and political scholarship has opened new pathways for the comprehension of the role of emotions, connecting the micropolitics of social movements to the macro-politics.

One can talk about emotions operating in protest at multiple levels. Within the broad field of studies on emotions and collective action, two trends have been developed. The first one is mainly the effort to bring emotional dynamics into the explanation of all aspects of collective action and social movements. In this view, emotions are considered to affect movement emergence, maintenance, recruitment processes, the internal dynamics of a movement, its decline, and so forth. Briefly, emotion is what puts the 'move' in movement. Linked to the 'relational' view of social movements, this approach advocates the acknowledgment of the role of emotions as an essential part of collective action. Much scholarship links cognitive framing, narration and discourse to the practice of mobilization through emotion. So far, the "rediscovery" of emotions has followed different theoretical and interdisciplinary paths, and has often been incorporated into heterogeneous approaches (Goodwin et.al., 2001; Hoggett, 2009).

The second approach attempts to incorporate emotions into existing

categories of social movement theory, including organization, identity, framing, repertoires, etc. Essentially, it is stated that emotions contribute to give a meaning to the personal, individual and collective actions. Indeed, different authors focusing on this horizon of analysis support the idea that emotions – rather than being viewed as opposed to reason – are a way of thinking and evaluating, as well as an indispensable source at the origin of all kinds of collective action (e.g. Gamson, 1992; Nussbaum, 2001).

Similar to the process of framing reality, emotions have a constructivist potential that, according to different authors (e.g. Gamson, 1992; Melucci, 1996), contributes to the shaping of reality through a series of dynamics. Here, we will focus on three central ideas linked with this: identity, injustice, and action. These factors, as we will see, can also be useful to enhance the theoretical debate about the relationship between social movements and democracy.

3.2.1 Identity

Emotions contribute to identity formation, which is an essential component of collective action. As with many other political phenomena, protest and social movements involve the formation of individual and collective identities. In this vein, building or reproducing identities is one of the processes through which individuals give meaning to their experiences and the political realm. From inside, social movements see the interconnection between individual-based experience and collective experience. Collective identities are based on, among other things, shared values, attitudes, worldviews, rituals, and shared performances in collective protests and actions. These factors set a process of trusting connections among individuals, which is an important element in mobilizations.

Within this context, identity can be both a precondition for, and a result of

collective action. In both cases, collective action needs the presence of a "we", which supplies the sense of cohesion and solidarity, as well as the identification of the "others", which is the collective the movement or collective action moves against (Melucci, 1996). A minimal level of moral empathy, among other emotions bonds, is therefore a necessary step in the demarcation of "we" and "them".

3.2.2 Injustice

Mobilizations often occur when a sense of injustice is felt by protesters and, more broadly, by a sector of a given population. A sense of injustice cannot emerge without a new diagnosis of the situation and a conviction that existing conditions are unjust (Gamson, 1992: 7, 31–2). In this sense, the reason people mobilize is to overcome some form of injustice – whether only perceived or effectively real. Events of social injustice can therefore cause indignation, moral shocks, and diffuse anger, and thus move citizens to action.

> "Different emotions can be stimulated by perceived inequities – cynicism, bemused irony, resignation. But injustice focuses on the righteous anger that puts fire in the belly and iron in the soul. Injustice… is a hot cognition, not merely an abstract intellectual judgment about what is equitable. The heat of moral judgement is intimately related to beliefs about what [concrete] acts or conditions have caused people to suffer undeserved hardship or loss". (Gamson, 1992: 31–2)

That means that emotions such as indignation and anger must be seen beyond their being one of the many preconditions of protest. They have to be linked to the broad conception of justice. In this sense, it has been emphasized that the capacity to respond with anger is crucial to a sense of justice (Nussbaum, 1994: 403; Solomon, 1990: 242). This recent scholarship has also underlined that social movements can channel collective emotions at particular targets.

3.2.3 Action

Emotional responses to a situation perceived as unjust can lead individuals and groups to mobilizations. This response involves the move to protest: from framed emotions to action. In this sense, emotions are an essential factor of what keeps a movement moving; as well the lack of emotional dynamics being able t explain the movements' decline.

Taking all this into account, we can outline some thesis regarding the social and political role of emotions.

1. Politically speaking, emotions and feelings rules contribute to individual and collective action, and contribute to the understanding of certain aspects of political participation (Hall, 2002: 739-41; Turner & Stets 2005: 290).

2. Emotions clearly take part in the formation of the social bonds and promote social cohesion (Markell, 2000).

3. As we have seen in the first chapter, contemporary authors working in the neo-Aristotelian tradition consider emotions as a fundamental part in the democratic education for virtuous citizens.

Although all movements are clearly emotional and strategic at the same time, emotions can play a central role in mobilization and social change. Seen as the *feeling side of values*, emotions can perform an important link between political and moral principles and actions. In this vein, contending the *status quo*, social movements often re-interpret specific aspects of political reality through both an emotional and cognitive-normative re-framing of the reality.

4. The case of anti-austerity mobilizations

Since 2011 the anti-austerity mobilizations sprawled around the world. In the European context, especially the peripheral countries have witnessed the emergence of a series of protests and collective mobilizations that has shaken the political debate and agenda, giving birth to new political parties. The most famous movements include the Spanish 15-M or *Indignados* movement, and the Greek *Aganaktismenoi*. Together with other European mobilizations in countries such as Portugal, Italy, and the United Kingdom, and the experience of the *Occupy movements* in the United States, these movements challenged the neoliberal ideology and the concrete policies the various governments have been implementing in the name of austerity. Although each of these movements is clearly shaped by the local political context – which includes the cultural and organizational traditions –, they shared numerous elements. They were all massive protests that, particularly through the employment of new social media technologies, involved citizens from differentiated social and political origins, and that created at least partially autonomous spaces for demonstration and political engagement. Beyond structural and organizational features, they also shared the common perception[15] of political and economic injustice, which soon provoked indignation and anger.

As a physical proclamation of discontent towards the political regimes and the financial system, these variegated anti-austerity movements represent an attempt to reconfigure the relationship between the political and the economic worlds, through manifestation of moral outrage, public occupation

[15] An interesting analysis somehow related to the theme of 'perception' is also developed by Felix Ovejero (2013), who delves into the relationship between the 15M movements (or the Indignados) and the theory of democracy. Specifically focusing on topics such as ignorance and participation, Ovejero argues for a republican and deliberative form of democracy.

and street assembly and speech. Many of these demonstrations, in fact, borrowed from Stephan Hessel's manuscript '*Indignez-vous*!'(2010), which calls for an end to apathy and a show of indignation and outrage. If their primary economic goals include a fight against the financial system, guilty of creating huge wealth inequalities, the political ambition was also to democratize power in more participatory ways, which could empower the masses bearing the brunt of economic strains. In this vein, these movements' aim is to shake people out of their routine trust and loyalty towards the authorities, and they represent a sign of popular discontent and disaffection towards political representatives and the financial system (Tormey, 2012).

While some scholar prefer to choose the term 'occupy social movements' (Tejerina et al., 2013) – or 'networks of outrage and hope' (Castells, 2012) – over the more widespread 'indignant mobilizations', what is clear is that these phenomena put the emphasis on a greater concern: the political relevance of affective bonds. Although Benjamín Tejerina argues that indignation was not the "sole, and perhaps not even the most decisive emotion at play in this cycle of contention" (2013: 378), indignation, and similar emotional perceptions such as outrage and anger were nonetheless the emotions that ignited these mobilizations, and characterized their political nature. As we have already stated, a 'strategic' vision was clearly present within these movements – i.e. their objective was to modify a situation perceived as unjust[16]. Nonetheless we will argue that the emotional dynamics and their discursive translations played a key role: not only was the identity formations of protesters at play, but it was directly involved in the questioning of current democratic practices that the protests performed. In this vein, we will link this horizon with the theoretical reflection on democracy and populism.

[16] For more details on the 'strategic' dimension of recent anti-austerity movements in Spain see, for Instance, Fuster Morell (2012), Velasco (2011).

In this paragraph we analyse some discursive elements of the *Indignados* movements, particularly highlighting the cognitive and emotional dimensions. The idea is to show how they were at the centre of the construction of the movement identity, as well as how they were part and parcel of the framing process of the political reality, through what William Gamson (1992) have called the *injustice frame*. Sense of injustice, identity formation and action are, we will argue, the vectors through which affective dynamics play a political role. We will therefore focus on the myriads of emotions that were at play within this anti-austerity movement, both the 'negative' and 'positive' affects that took place in the public space and which were discursively articulated. On the one hand, the ways in which affective ties were at play in the identity formation of protesters will be emphasized. On the other hand, it will become clear – as we will further develop in the next chapter – that emotions are linked to the struggle over the meaning of political categories.

4.1 Myriads of emotions

In the *Indignados*, but also in other anti-austerity mobilizations and occupy movements, we have witnessed the emergence, presence and usage of a variegated number of emotional factors (within rhetoric, discourse, dynamics), obviously related to the economic and political crisis these social movements are embedded. Wrath, indignation, fear, anger, anxiety, humiliation, pain, and so forth are all distinctive emotions of these phenomena. In the specific Spanish case, *¡Democracia Real Ya!* (DRY) – one of the many platforms that have played a key role in organizing of the protests of 15th of May 2011 and the following events – called for an end of citizenry apathy, and a facing up to the unjust situation. It called the people to properly feel this unjust context, and to act consequently. In this sense, with slogans such as '*Toma la calle*', DRY strategically 'mobilized' the emotion of indignation to encourage participation in collective action. From an explicative

point of view one might argue that these articulated 'constellations of emotions' were among the principal factors driving people to mobilize and participate in anti-austerity protests. Passion and emotions, as much as ideology and interests, impulse people to mobilize and join collective actions (Goodwin et al., 2001).

4.1.1 Framing Injustice

Clearly, a first step towards mobilization is the perception of an unjust situation. The *injustice frame* formulated by Gamson (1992: 112-115) provides a useful analytical tool to interpret the motivational reason to join collective action, which at once legitimates disobedience. The unjust situation, in this sense, responds to deep political and economic consequences citizens have suffered as result of the austerity measures implemented by governments. The list of grievances denounced by these anti-austerity mobilizations is long, and mobilizations have blamed both political and economic sectors as responsible for this.

Examples of the ways in which the protesters expressed their perception to this unjust situation can be found on both sides, the financial and political ones, seen as strictly linked together.

> "We don't understand why we need to pay the bills of a crisis whose authors continue to enjoy record benefits. We are fed up with injustices" (15M manifesto '*How to Cook a Non-violent Revolution*')[17]

Similarly, protesters expressed a sense of political uselessness – hence injustice – claiming a voice[18]:

[17] Available at: http://takethesquare.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Roll-Up_eng_v2_reviewed.pdf. Also cited by Perugorría and Tejerina (2013).
[18] See also Pérez and Barnett (2011)

> "We can vote, but we don't have a voice, and we are frustrated by the politicians' lack of will to develop mechanisms of direct participation in decision-making processes. Mechanisms that would put an end to corruption and to the lack of transparency in politics and public institutions, and that would place the citizen before the markets and other private interests". (15-M manifesto '*How to Cook a Non-violent Revolution*')

Injustice	**Slogans**
	- "¡*No somos mercancía en manos de políticos y banqueros*!"("We are not goods to be sold by politicians and bankers") - "*No hay pan para tanto chorizos*" ("The budget is not big enough for so much corruption") - "A *los bancos se les rescató. A nosotros se nos liquidó*" (The banks got bailed out. We got wiped out") - "*Esta deuda no es nuestra*" ("This is not our debt") -"*Del absolutismo al bipartidismo*" ("From absolutism to the two-party system")

Table 4.1 Key slogans during the *Indignados* mobilizations in Spain, own elaboration

4.1.2 Framing identity

Despite outrage and indignation being considered essential emotions during these protests, other affective states such as humiliation and hope were clearly involved and played a key role in generating and sustaining collective actions. As it has been argued (Perugorría & Tejerina, 2013), participants were also experiencing joy and empowerment from their being involved in public 'encounters' with other peers during the protests – the narrative of being together (Perrugoría and Tejerina, 2013: 437). As Donatella della Porta (2014: 55) points out by quoting Postill (2012), both cognitive and emotional

mechanism are embedded into networks of relations. A strong sense of connection between protesters was created and various sets of affects were at play: joy, pride, humour, and irony also expressed the prefigurative relations taking place during mobilizations. By creating shared social bonds, these affective emotions can engender trust and solidarity, and thus form a basis for collective identity and more persistent engagement with the movement.

In this sense, building an identity is an essential moment for individuals and for the collective, and this process not only involves cognitive agreements but also demands affective or emotional investments. In an intersubjective interplay of attachments, recognition, feelings, and meanings creation, collective identities are formed and shared. In the case of the *Indignados* movements, having 'problems' instead of ideologies or a specific political membership is a clear feature of *inclusiveness*, which marked the *transversal* character of the 15M since its inception. Quoting the manifesto of DRY, helps us comprehend this issue:

> "Some of us consider ourselves progressive, others conservative. Some of us are believers, some not. Some of us have clearly defined ideologies, others are apolitical, but *we are all* concerned and *angry* about the political, economic, and social outlook, which we see around us: corruption among politicians, businessmen, and bankers leaving us helpless, without a voice". (*Real Democracy Now Manifest*, Italics emphasis added)[19]

In this context, it seems plausible to argue that the *Indignados'* political subject is made up of ordinary, outraged and angry people. Their being angry is indeed what unifies heterogeneous individuals, giving them a political nature.

[19] Available at: http://www.democraciarealya.es/manifiesto-comun/manifesto-english/

Identity	Slogans
	- "*Indignados y organizados*" (Indignant and Organised") - "*No somos antisistemas, el sistema es antinosotros*" ("We are not against the systems, the system is against us")

Table 4.2 Key slogans during the *Indignados* mobilizations in Spain. Own elaboration

4.1.3 Framing action

As we have already mentioned, emotions are among the mechanisms that drive people to participate in collective action. Especially the affective responses to a situation perceived as unjust can lead individuals and groups to mobilizations. Similarly to ideology and interests, the affective investment of individuals and move people to engage politically. Moreover, in the specific case of the Spanish anti-austerity mobilizations, the fact that both 'negative' and 'positive' emotions contributed to the concrete mobilizations of masses of citizens is noteworthy.

In this vein, the sense of empowerment, and joy among protesters allowed the 15-M movement to somehow create the spaces for '*Real Democracy*' – engaging in a horizontal, inclusive, and participatory ways of deciding about '*common matters*' – in opposition to the 'institutionalized politics' of political parties. Similarly, other affective dimensions contributed to trigger political horizons and actions. If, on the one hand indignation about political corruption and banks bail out encouraged people to abstain from voting, the emergence of another 'emotional' signifiers such as 'dignity' in subsequent years – on March 22, 2014 a March of Dignity was celebrated in Madrid, gathering people from all over Spain – created the political space for autonomous multitude (Prentoulis and Thomassen, 2014: 221).

Action	Slogans
	- "*Es hora de que nos unamos. Es hora de que nos escuchen. ¡Tomemos las calles del mundo*!" ("It is time for us to unite. It's time they listen to us. Let's take the streets of the world!")
	- "*De la indignación a la acción. Toma la calle*" ("From indignation to action. Take the street")
	-*"El pueblo unido funciona sin partidos*" ("The people united, can function without political parties")
	- "*No les votes*" ("Don't vote for them"),
	- *"Democracia significa democracia directa*" ("Democracy means direct democracy").

Table 4.3 Key slogans during the *Indignados* mobilizations in Spain. Own elaboration

5. Conclusions

In this chapter we have focused on the study of protest and social movements giving special attention to the multiple scientific explanations social research has offered. We have highlighted that protest and social movements have been integrated into a variety of theories of collective action. Resource mobilization and political opportunity structures have been the main methodological approaches scholars have used to deal with social movements for decades. Within this perspective, scholars have particularly tried to answer a series of questions regarding the emergence, success, organization and structure, as well as decline of social mobilizations. Similarly we have stressed the scientific approaches oriented to the analysis of the *symbolic* processes of collective action as both an inner character and a political consequence of protest and social movements. Here, themes such as identity and emotions resonate with

the process of framing, that is the social construction of the political realm through the cognitive dynamics, which these mobilizations foster. Scientific explanations of mobilizations converge therefore with a broad interpretation of collective action as factor of political change. We thus have argued that emotions, as much as other cultural and ideological meanings, are necessary to understand the current wave of mobilizations, in their identity and action. In this sense, the case of anti-austerity mobilizations is an example of the way in which the emotional rhetoric plays a central role in the concrete activity of collective action. Drawing on the *injustice frame* put foreword by Gamson (1992), we have highlighted three different – albeit linked – horizons of interplay between emotions and political implication: they have a constructive role in the perception of the unjust situation, in framing the collective identity, and in encouraging action.

As a result, while it becomes clear that movements are at once strategic and emotional – concretely policy-oriented as well as factors re-framing political reality –, we have stressed that they often open up theoretical questions about the nature of politics and democracy. In the next chapter we will focus on this aspect.

Chapter 5. Social and protest movements in times of austerity (II): meta-questions about democracy

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter we have focused on the wide range of approaches to collective action, with particular emphasis on the role of emotions in the understanding of current anti-austerity mobilizations. As much as other factors, emotions are a key element to take into account, not only in the causal explanation of collective action, but also in the comprehension of the nature of political change involved in mobilizations.

Here we want to suggest a way of interpreting the function of emotions beyond the sociological study of collective. We will therefore pay special attention to the ways in which discursive and rhetorical translations of emotional dynamics properly interplay with the same definition of political ideas, such as 'the people' and 'democracy'. Drawing on the example of recent anti-austerity mobilization, the aim is also to address the critical power of collective mobilizations, and to show how notions such as representation, participation, and political subjectivity have been articulated during the protests.

2. Movements beyond explanation: "meta-question" about democracy

If the focus of attention moves from the explanation and 'sociological' analysis of mobilization to the *matter* of it, one might ask what protest and social movements have to do with democracy, its principles as well as its moral and political values. Taking into account what we have said up to now, the idea that social movements have a prominent role in the concrete ways in which politics 'is done' should be clear enough. But what about democracy as such?

Mentioning the research field dedicated to the democratization process helps us to correctly address this question. Even though social movements and the process of democratization have been two different objects for long time considered separately within scientific investigations, recently they have been more and more addressed in a systematic and comprehensive way. Traditionally, in fact, research on democratization has mainly focused on socioeconomic variables and elite behaviour, considering social movements merely as the result of institutional opportunities for protest and the freedom of expression. However, it has also been argued that popular mobilization is important for regime change (della Porta 2009), and that there are potential insights in a link between movement and democratization studies. Charles Tilly, for instance, has focused on the relationship between democratization and social movements, revealing a significant correspondence (Tilly, 2004). In his work, he has singled out the ways in which social movements have played a role within regime change and the process of democratization – broadly defined as the "populist" and the "elitist" ways to democracy (Tilly, 1995: 1). While the first way emphasizes the participation from below, the public spaces of deliberation and the different expression of interests and needs of the *demos* participating in the movements themselves, the "elitist" approach is a top-down process controlled by political and institutional leaders. Within this

context, he has concretely stated that, “democratization as such further encourages people to form social movements”, as well as that “under some conditions and in a more limited way, social movements themselves promote democratization” (Tilly, 2004: 131). In this vein, it has been argued that the emergence of the Global Justice Movement encouraged political scientists to pay more attention to issues of democracy.

What these reflections show is that there is an essential concern about the role played by social and protest movements, both in the regime setting and institutional change. Is the contentious, and ‘questioning’ role of social movements a necessary element to democracy? Do social movements lead to a ‘democratization of democracy’? These questions show that social and protest movements open up an interesting line of theoretical and empirical research within studies on democracy.

Moreover, as we have outlined in the previous paragraph, mobilization is also characterized by emotional dynamics and a symbolic codification of realty. Emotions and the framing process, in this sense, not only influence various phases of a movement, explaining their emergence and decline, they also show the core of the political struggle, opening up theoretical questions about the organisational structure of government, as well as about its very nature. These factors and perspectives, in other words, show that beyond the mobilization *per se* – what research on social movements has mainly been focuses on – there are meta-questions about the political realm and, as the recent wave of protest movements has shown, about democracy.

Within this context, emotions and the framing process represent in our view a link between ‘strategic’ and ‘cultural’ analyses of social and protest movements, which leads us to the broader reflection upon political agency in contemporary society, characterized by a range of theoretical perspectives such as, among others, Marxism, radical and direct democracy, psychoanalytic

traditions, feminism, and anarchism. We obviously cannot deal with all these traditions of thought here. What we will show is some recent reflections about the relationship between the mobilizations of 2011 (and subsequent years) and democratic theory. It will be clear in this way that, beyond the sociological and politological explanations of social and protest movements, there are inherently *theoretical* questions raised by recent mobilizations.

Before expanding on this, it must be emphasized that **t**here is no consensus over the definition of democracy, its very nature is often contested, and there is an ongoing scholarly – as well as non-academic – debate on the subject (e.g. Dahl, 2006; Mouffe, 2000). The issue, as we will show in these pages, goes beyond the academic interest, and has been reinvigorated by the late wave of protest and social movements. Although a minimum set of fundamental liberal principles – which ultimately protect individual freedom – is almost universally accepted as necessary to a democratic regime, many burning questions are still open. What is this essential set of democratic factors made up of? How does one conceive the relationship between freedom and equality? How must the relationship between democratic principles and economic variables be articulated?

Dealing with these and other questions, democratic theory and political science have long been facing the dilemma of defining what regimes can be defined as democratic. In this vein, it is clear that the struggle lies at the level of definition: the reflections have been articulated in different manners depending on what is conceived as necessary to democracy. While 'thin' definitions have underlined elements such as the majority rule, the existence of free and fair elections, and the protection of minority rights, empirical studies of democracy have been underlined a series of basic elements. Dahl (1971; 1988) stresses, for instance, eight necessary variables for a democratic society: the presence of regular and free elections; universal suffrage; universal eligibility for public office; freedom to form and join political parties

and other organisations; freedom of expression; the presence of diverse sources of information; as well as the role of votes and preferences in formulating the concrete policies of a government. Within this context, it might seem that democracy is a dichotomous concept – a state is either democratic or not.

On the other hand, beyond a minimal and empirical definition of democracy, there is an articulated debate that, besides interpreting freedom and as an essential component of democracy, delves into other horizons such as, among other themes, political pluralism and participation, civic culture, civil liberties, and the same forms of decision-making. It is within this horizon of 'defining' a democracy that recent mobilizations should be interpreted.

In this vein, we will show that this critical and probing feature resonates with the emotional and affective dimension we have highlighted in previous chapters. Here, we will place emphasis on the fact that anti-austerity mobilization are related to the search and construction of the political subject, 'the people'; similarly, they refer to a particular way of legitimizing politics in the global era, and consequently, the same definition of democracy. In this light, the last wave of protests and movements is a concrete example of the role of emotions in democracies and, at the same time, the manifestation of a deeper democratic challenge tout court.

2.1 What type of democracy?

The recent wave of anti-austerity movements that spread throughout Europe and elsewhere since 2011 has been undoubtedly inspired by the Arab Spring, and the strategy of occupations of public spaces implemented by this and other *cycles of contention* (Tarrow, 1998). Though, while the protest in Middle Eastern countries was aimed at changing the nature of political regimes, the

indignados in Spain and other countries occupied squares and streets in order to protest against austerity measures. The financial and economic crisis that started in 2008 provided the context for the emergence of anti-austerity and Occupy movements in Europe and beyond. Related to this, the primary goals of these variegated movements were to call for an end to the growing inequality and unemployment, thus challenging neoliberal practices that imposed public budget cuts, and the privatization of resources and services. While each movement is shaped by the local context, traditions, and political settings, they all aimed at transforming the economic system. However, the recent wave of protests that has shaken the world was characterized by movements of 'indignant' citizens whose common prerogative – beyond decent jobs and an end to economic austerity – was claiming for 'real democracy'. In this vein, while the concrete economic-based claims were related to economic justice and anti-austerity discourses, a more broad demand for a different – truly 'real' – democracy was a founding feature of all social upheavals of recent years.

Issue of protest	**No. of protests in the world 2006-2013**
'Real Democracy'	218
Corruption	149
Justice	56
Transparency and Accountability	42
Citizen Surveillance	27
Anti-war	20
Sovereignty	11
Total	376

Table 5.1 Source: Ortiz, Burke, Berrada, Cortés (2013). *World Protest Report 2006-2013*

This table shows the number of protests in the world between the years 2006-2013, listed by their issue or theme. It is interesting to see that mobilizations claiming a "real democracy" were the most numerous followed by demonstrations protesting against corruption.

In this sense, two consequences are to be drawn**.** The first on is that, the demand for 'real' democracy reveals a strong critique of, at once, the form and the functioning of contemporary democratic politics. Particularly across Europe and the United States, the claim for a different politics became a common frame among protesters and analysts. What was contested about the contemporary functioning of democracy is the pervasive corruption of elites and, more broadly, the lack of representation of the popular will. Firstly, protestors criticised the traditional political parties, seen as a corrupted political class that contributed to the corruption of democracy itself. Furthermore, the current crisis of democracy is strictly associated to the financial crisis, and neoliberal ideology. Along with indignation against the economic and political state of affairs, protesters clamoured for a "real democracy" which is often viewed as opposed to a market based economy and more generally capitalism. Indeed, existing democracies are criticized for having allowed the abduction of democratic principles, by financial powers and international organizations. Although the activists' discourse on democracy is complex and articulate in different manners, it is based on the main criticisms of the ever-decreasing quality of liberal democracies, and the primacy of neoliberal practices. Neoliberalism is thus denounced as the political doctrine that is affecting the very essence of democracy, disfiguring its principles and concretely limiting political action. Anti-austerity protests, in this sense, criticised the current form of representative politics, which is increasingly seen as complicit in emptying democracy of content while perpetuating gross inequalities (Hardt and Negri, 2011). Within this context, since protest movements directly challenge this paradigm, asking to re-

configure democracy as an instrument of the people – 'the 99-percent' in the *Occupy* movement's words – as opposed to the global capitalist elite, 'the 1-percent', they revealed that the very meaning of democracy is contested**.** These movements, in other words, have replaced the 'meta-question' about democracy at the centre of their action (Offe, 1985)

The second consequence is that this critique to the contemporary forms of doing politics - labelled as corrupted and submitted to financial imperatives – is strictly linked to the alternatives these movements propose to representative and parliamentary democracy. As Donatella della Porta (2013: 57) rightly reminds quoting Kitschelt (1993:15): "The stakes and the struggle of the left and libertarian social movements thus invoke an ancient element of democratic theory that calls for an organization of collective decision making referred to in varying ways as classical, populist, communitarian, strong, grassroots, or direct democracy against a democratic practice in contemporary democracies labelled as realist, liberal, elite, republican, or representative democracy".

Giving a meaning to the 'Political'	**Slogans**
Meanings of democracy	- *They call it democracy, but it is not*', ('*Lo llaman democracia y no lo es*'); - '*Error 404: Democracy not found*'; - '*The Government likes it when we are silent because it seems like we do not exist*' ('*Les gusta cuando callamos porque estamos como ausentes*') - '*You vote once every four years and they call it democracy'* ('*Votas una vez cada cuatro años y lo llaman democracia*'); - '*Democracy means direct democracy*' ('*Democracia significa democracia directa*').

Table 5.2 Key slogans during the *Indignados* mobilizations in Spain. Own elaboration

Within the variegated phenomena of anti-austerity movements, the same concept of "democracy" was at the core of the political struggle: ideas of horizontal, participative, deliberative, and common democracy were, among other definitions, the models that these movements wanted to concretely test, in opposition to the representative-parliamentary democracy. According to this, in the political vision of social movements, there is the idea that a different democratic asset would be closer to the expression of people's will, than liberal democracy.

2.1.1 Participation and deliberation

According to Donatella della Porta (2009; 2013: 60-84; 2015), recent anti-austerity movements developed a special focus on direct democracy and in modes of public deliberation. Comparing the occupy phenomena with other social forums such as the Global Justice Movement (GJM) of previous years, she states that there is a common interest for a more participatory – direct – form of decision-making within these phenomena. Outlining both similarities and differences between GJM and anti-austerity movements, she points out that the anti-austerity activists' discourse on democracy takes up some criticism about the decreasing quality of liberal democracies already present in the GJM, as well as some proposals inspired by participatory and deliberative democratic theory. While participation from below has always been a common feature of protest and social movements – somehow their very nature –, the recent wave of anti-austerity protests also resonate with the conceptions and practices of deliberative democracy, creating egalitarian and inclusive public spheres.

Assessing the phenomenon of the *acampadas* in the recent anti-austerity and occupy movements from cross-time perspective, Donatella Della Porta (2013)

carries out an interesting investigation on the diffusion of ideas across time and spaces. Particularly, she delves into the conceptions of democracy within these social movements, and states that there are some sharing traits in their decision making processes, beyond the critique to the representative system. Della Porta finds that the collective action in many European cities – and beyond – followed some rules that are at the core of the theoretical reflection on deliberation (e.g. Dryzek, 2000), such as:

- The idea of equality: deliberation takes place among free and equal citizens. Deliberation is conceived as based on these assumptions, as it gives the moral legitimacy to the activity of giving reasons and argument for conflicting situation. (Gutmann and Thompson, 1999: 267).

- The principle of inclusiveness: citizens have to be included in the process of decision-making and must be given the chance to express their views. According to many supporters of deliberation, there is the possibility – and the duty – to build spaces of deliberation beyond the institutional level. Jürgen Habermas (1996), argue for a first "informal" deliberation taking place outside institutions that can affect the conventional forms of politics. Similarly, John Dryzek (2000) argues that social movements and their deliberative openness can represent a critical eye upon public institutions.

- The central value of public good. As Jon Elster has argued, a deliberative setting facilitates the perception of politics as the search for a common good (Elster 1999). In this vein, Cohen has argued that this model of democracy, alternative conceptions of public good is at the core of the political debate, so that it depends on citizens' identities and interests the way in which it is built.

- The transformation of preferences in interaction. One of the strengths of deliberative democracy is its defence of the transformation of citizen's preferences through the deliberation itself (Dryzek 2000: 79). The process is indeed characterized as a way through which initial preferences are transformed in order to take into account the points of view of the others. (e.g. Habermas, 1996).

- Rational argumentation: the force of the better argument. The process of transformation of citizens' preferences is enabled by what has been called the force of the better argument. Stressing reason and argumentation, supporters of deliberative democracy argue for a "dispassionate, reasoned, logical" type of communication (Dryzek 2000: 64). Although criticism have been moved to the overemphasized rational dimension of communication within deliberation, it has been argued that a setting of intersubjective communication – thanks to the attitude to reciprocal listening between participants – would permit the confrontation on the basis of rational argumentation.

- Consensus: the aim of deliberation is to reach common decisions approvable by all participants. Democracy is not viewed as the mere aggregation of preferences, but as the process through which heterogeneous political visions can reach consensual decision – thus not respecting a pure majoritarian rule. Since deliberative democracy is conceived as a way to address controversies through dialogue, a conflictual situation should be addressed until a consensual and universally acceptable decision can be taken **(**Gutmann and Thompson, 1996).

In this vein, della Porta (2013) argues that during the protest of 2011 and the following years, in many European squares anti-austerity movements carried out successful experiments of participatory deliberative democracy.

2.1.2 Representation between vertical and horizontal politics

Given that social and protest movements are often characterized by a strong participatory nature, the question of representation – and the impasse *vertical* versus *horizontal* politics – has frequently represented a dilemma for both scholars and activists. How to reconcile grassroots democracy with the (inevitable) leadership function?

It is clearly obvious that the question of representation has been at the centre of democratic theory – one might say – since its origins. Representation has often been labelled as the core idea of modern democracy (Viera & Runciman, 2008: 60), and theoretical and empirical disputes have long occupied scholarly debate (e.g. Pitkin, 1972; Manin, 1997; García Guitián, 2007; Saward, 2010). However, what we want to delve into here is the recent debate related to the last wave of mobilizations. We have seen that the conception of democracy social movements entail – especially the GJM and anti-austerity mobilizations – affirms that the people themselves should directly intervene in the political decision-making process. Accordingly, these phenomena involve a direct theoretical consequence for the representative mechanism. It is indeed patent that, for instance, the *Indignados*' slogan *"¡No Nos Representan!"* pointed to a broad criticism towards, first of all, the current elected politicians, and beyond that, the same nature of representation (e.g. Tormey 2012; Prentoulis and Thomassen, 2013). Thus, contemporary representative democracy and its political elite are – as we have already mentioned – associated with the erosion of democracy and the same capacity of politics to influence the social realm. In this vein, recent social movements have manifestly supported, as we have previously observed, alternative forms of democratic decision-making, such as deliberative and participatory models. More concretely, citizens have fostered the idea of restoring the importance of participation through direct mechanisms such as referendums and direct involvements in the biggest

economic and social choices.

On the other hand, the claim "*They do not represent us*" suggests the (partial) refuse of hierarchical and representative mechanisms. It has indeed been affirmed that the essentially horizontal character of the recent protest movements, from the *Indignados* to *Occupy Wall Street* (Feixa, 2013; Hardt and Negri, 2012). Supporting this horizontalism – which is indeed clearly part of these movements – scholars from different theoretical and ideological positions have recently insisted on the possibility of going beyond verticality and representation (e.g. Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014; Graeber, 2014; Hardt and Negri, 2012**).** Since delegation has become an instrument of oligarchic and technocratic power – representative democracy, they say, necessarily creates a specialized body of representatives disconnected from citizens –, these authors have endorsed the idea and the practice of *autonomous* democracy: a concrete form of democracy based on the people's effective sovereignty, egalitarianism and the direct participation of citizens, beyond the limits of electoral and representative politics.

Notwithstanding, this perspective focusing on the *autonomous* and *horizontal* character of social movements and their radical democratic ideas has been criticized for being an ineffective political project. Among the same post-Marxist left, other positions have been developed, supporting the necessity of verticality – and thus representation – for an operative alternative to the crisis of liberal democracy. As Marina Prentoulis and Lasse Thomassen (2013) have stated, there are interesting links between the discourse of these movements and the academic debate, which principally gather around the work of Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, and Slavov Žižek.

Representation?	Slogans
Vertical *VS* horizontal	-*They don't represent us*!' *('¡No nos representan!'* in the original Spanish), -'*Don't vote for them*' ('*No les votes*'), -'*My dreams do not fit in the ballot box*' ('*Mis sueños no caben en tus urnas'*),

Table 5.3 Key slogans during the *Indignados* mobilizations in Spain. Own elaboration

2.1.3 The place of politics and the democratic subjectivity

Criticizing or refusing the idea and practice of representation, recent protest and social movements have also suggested another way of doing politics and engaging with the public sphere. The same ideas of horizontalism and participation in decision-making, gave democracy a new locale. Indeed, it has been argued that the cycle of anti-austerity protests throughout Europe and beyond helped visibilize horizontal and deliberative practices – often confined to micro and local spheres of activism (Romanos, 2011).

Certainly, the occupation of public spaces, such as squares and streets, has represented a salient feature of the last anti-austerity movements. Democracy, it is argued, has to re-gain its grassroots nature, through concrete practice in the public sphere. The consensus model of direct democracy employed within General Assemblies and working groups, thus, is the concrete way of practicing horizontal politics. Working groups and General Assemblies are undoubtedly paradigmatic of the wave of recent anti-austerity mobilizations, and particularly the *Occupy* experience. David Graeber, both inquiring on and advocating for the political visions these movements entail, has insisted that "it's not a question of building an entirely new society whole cloth. It's a

question of building on what we are already doing, expanding the zones of freedom, until freedom becomes the ultimate organizing principle" (2014: 295). Graeber has in this sense argued that, since contemporary concrete form of parliamentary democracy is a co-opted democracy – kidnapped by financial capitalism –, *Occupy Wall Street* and similar experiences are a radical, popular struggle to change the state of affairs and re-establish the very nature of democracy, which has its profound roots into anarchism.

> "A democratic government derives its just power from the people, but corporations do not seek consent to extract wealth from the people and the Earth; and that no true democracy is attainable when the process is determined by economic power. We come to you at a time when corporations, which place profit over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, run our governments." (Declaration of the Occupation of New York City, 2011)[20]

Moreover, the democratic *milieu* of the recent cycle of protest, as witnessed by the discourse of the new political parties that have been born as result of these mobilizations, marked the return to 'inequality' and 'injustice' as master frames (Perugorría & Tejerina, 2013: 426). The slogans and mottos used during the protests unambiguously targeted to capitalist greed, precariousness, political corruption, and those such as bankers and politicians who were judged guilty of making the '*common people'* suffer. In this vein, while it is clearly obvious that the economic crisis has favoured the return of 'materialistic' issues at the centre of the political struggle, inequality and injustice are also to be found within political themes – as we are arguing in these pages. The issue of identity – and concretely the identity of the democratic subject – is quite salient within these movements, as attested to by the same critique of representation and the practice of horizontal politics.

[20] Available at: http://occupywallstreet.net/learn

Although these movements do not struggle in defence or for the recognition of a particular kind of *identity* – as struggles for ethnical or sexual identities do –, the same nature of the protest is marked by a double process. On the one hand, the protesters were forging their own individual, and simultaneously collective identity. In this context, as it has been argued:

> "Protesters were demanding recognition not 'just' as citizens, but also as human beings with the right to lead lives worth living. Some *occupy movements* have explicitly referred to the values of inclusion, toleration, sharing, and caring, and have even envisioned an alternative kind of society, more concerned with the realization of humanistic and community values than the endless and mindless pursuit of individual profits" (Tejerína et al., 2013: 385)

On the other hand, these protest movements were related to the shaping of the democratic subject: "the people". Horizontal politics, the critique of representation, and experiments in the direct participation of citizens in decision-making were all expression of a challenge to representative politics, blamed for emptying democracy of its very content: the will of the people.

> "We are assembling in public, we are coming together as bodies in alliance, in the street and in the square. We are standing here together making democracy, enacting the phrase 'We the people'" (Butler, 2012: 192).

Constructing 'the people' as the very political subject in opposition to the elitist politicians, businessmen and bankers – singled out as enemies who hold power unjustly – the struggle of protest movements was profoundly characterized by a deeply political and symbolic value. In this vein, the process of *framing* and definition of political realm come back within these theoretical questions about the very nature of the *political* subject and types of democratic government.

2.2 Post-democracy *versus* populism?

These reflections on the place of politics and the democratic subjectivity bring us back to the question of popular sovereignty. As has become clear, recent anti-austerity movements seem to resonate with a series of radical democratic and participatory political projects. They directly challenge the democratic elitism according to which, "democracy does not mean and cannot mean that the people actually rule in any obvious sense of the terms 'people' and 'rule'. Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them" (Schumpeter, 2003: 284-5). As we have seen, the anti-austerity mobilizations and the new political subjects emerging from the crisis can be interpreted as struggles between different conceptions of democracy, and particularly between what Robert Dahl has called 'polyarchy', as opposed to the Madisonian and 'populist democracy' (Dahl, 2006).

In the same line, recent protest movements and the new political parties that have followed are often viewed as linked to the critique of the technocratic turn and the global return of populism in contemporary politics. Contemporary elitism and technocratic politics have been framed in different ways, and particularly as a post-political or post-democratic form of government. It mainly labels the series of current tendencies that characterise the loss of some central democratic practices in the name of expertise and technical knowledge, as a basis for political government (Crouch 2004: 6). This means that, while all the institutions and formal democratic bodies remain in place, the centres of political decision have gradually moved somewhere else (e.g. Rancière, 1999; Crouch, 2004; Mouffe, 2005). Although the parliaments and other representative organizations still function, there are myriads of formal and informal non-accountable institutions – the IMF, the rating agencies, multinational corporations, as well as some of the EU

institutions – that effectively control the decision-making process. Moreover, media and 'experts' have acquired a powerful role within this context: "while elections certainly exist and can change governments, public electoral debate is a tightly controlled spectacle, managed by rival teams of professionals expert in the techniques of persuasion, and considering a small range of issues selected by those teams" (Crouch 2004: 4).

> "Postdemocracy is the government practice and conceptual legitimation of a democracy after the demos, a democracy that has eliminated the appearance, miscount, and dispute of the people and is thereby reducible to the sole interplay of state mechanisms and combinations of social energies and interests" (Rancière, 1999: 102).

Since post-democracy seems to make 'the people' disappear (Rancière 2006: 80), one might gain the impression that there is a natural confrontation between this post-democratic evolution of elitism and populism. Within this context, recent developments resonate with a populist position, which mainly consist in the counter-position of two blocs and their correspective interests (Laclau, 2005). On the one hand the collective identified as 'the people', on the other hand those who belong to the hegemonic elites. The target then is the post-democratic trajectory of contemporary ruling institutions, which seem to bid popular sovereignty farewell (Beck, 2011**;** Habermas, 2011). Beyond the theoretical question whether the exercise of popular sovereignty might be concretely possible on a regular basis – which is obviously linked to the question of representation and direct government –, what seems clear is that, by making use of the notion of 'the people', populist movements and parties claim to represent the very essence of the popular sovereignty, which is seen as having been corrupted by elites.

Recent protest movements like the *Indignados* and *Occupy Wall Street* claim for 'the people' to be the real political subject. They construct 'the people' as the political subject in opposition to elitist politicians, businessmen and

bankers, highlighted as enemies that hold power unjustly. In this sense, these movements claim to express the true will of 'the people', as defined by its virtuosity and sovereignty. As we have already highlighted, populism tends to simplify of the problematic value that the term 'people' has always taken in the political discourse.

Populist articulation	**Slogan**
Opposing social blocs: we *VS* them	-'*The people should not fear the rulers, they should fear the people*' ('*El pueblo no debe temer a los gobernantes, estos deben temer al pueblo*') -'*The people united, can function without political parties*' ('*El pueblo unido funciona sin partidos*') -'*When are you going to do something for the people?*' ('*¿Cuándo vais a hacer algo para el pueblo*?') -'*We are not goods for sale by politicians and bankers*' ('¡*No somos mercancía en manos de políticos y banqueros!*') *-Markets rule, governments are subjected to them, and people react*' ('*Los mercados gobiernan, los gobiernos se someten, el pueblo reacciona'* in original Spanish) - 'If the underdogs move, the elite falls apart' ('Si los de abajo nos movemos, los de arriba se caen') - 'There is no right and left-wing politics, there is only tyranny and freedom' ('No hay derecha ni izquierda, solo hay tiranía o libertad') - 'We are not lefties, nor rightist. We are the underdogs and want do away with the elite' ('No somos ni de la izquierda ni de la derecha. Somos los de abajo y vamos a por los de arriba')

Table 5.4 Key slogans during the Indignados mobilizations in Spain. Own elaboration

Popular sovereignty is then at the centre of the debate. Populism – regardless of the definition we give it – is the most evident indicator of this. Within its core visions, the idea of popular sovereignty is someway 'decontested', and the normative principle according to which the general will of the people should be privileged over the preferences of the elite is one of the key features of the populist understanding of democracy. Margaret Canovan, for her part, interprets contemporary populism drawing on Oakeshott's distinction between the 'politics of faith' and the 'politics of scepticism' (Canovan, 1999). This distinction helps seeing the constitutive – perhaps alternative – visions of democracy. Indeed she suggests that democracy has two faces, the 'redemptive' and the 'pragmatic' one, which are opposed but also interdependent. On the one hand, the pragmatic face interprets democracy as "a way of coping peacefully with conflicting interests and views", and stresses the need for mediating institutions in the government of complex and plural societies, as a compulsory condition for the effectiveness and efficiency of democracy. On the other hand, the redemptive face looks at democracy as "the promise of a better world through action by the sovereign people" (Canovan, 1999: 11). Direct popular sovereignty – the 'people in action' – appears to Canovan as one of the main features of the political vision professed by populism.

Beyond these theoretical and historical assumptions, it is important to note that the same term 'populism' is the object of contemporary struggles. From a critical standpoint, intellectual supporters of a radicalization of democracy have contended that the same concept of 'populism' has become a name through which political and economic elites attempt to stigmatize and contain demands for more citizen participation, egalitarian justice, and alternative economic policies (e.g. Crouch, 2004; Rancière, 2006). While the purpose of these critical and negative interpretations of populism might be to delegitimise certain political movements and parties, in pointing out the

features of populist discourse they end up acknowledging the existence of distinct patterns of thought-practices: the articulation of the political field into two antagonistic blocs; the assumption of the existence of a homogeneous collective, 'the people'; as well as an allegation of the moral and normative legitimacy of 'the people's will' as the ultimate source for political authority and decision-making.

Whether or not 'populism' has currently become a general – often abused – name for the censure of political alternatives to the *status quo* – as if denouncing populism would legitimize the economic and political elites to 'govern without the people', 'without politics' (Rancière, 2006: 80) –, what results is that anti-austerity mobilizations resonate with these major theoretical issues. It is convenient to bear in mind that, as remarked by Margaret Canovan from a historical and theoretical perspective, popular sovereignty is the 'foundational myth' of modern representative politics: "we, the People', is somehow the source of political authority" (Canovan, 2005: 122). As well, within this foundational myth – to use Canovan's terminology –, the constitutive tension between the redemptive and pragmatic faces causes the concepts of 'the people' and popular sovereignty to remain both central features of contemporary politics and the sites of contestation (Stanley, 2008: 102).

2.2.1 Angry legitimacy

Given these statements, protest movements can be assimilated to some form of populism. With regards to populism – whose expression can be found at both ends of the political spectrum (Mény and Surel 2000) – its essential characteristic is the fact that it is expressed by parties and movements that claim to be the 'true democrats', the only ones who fight for the sovereignty of the people against the corrupt political class of professionals and bankers or the invasion of immigrants and foreigners. As highlighted by Eduardo

Gonzalez Calleja (2002, 967), populism is based on emotional speech that manages to mobilize the masses through its central axis, which is the idea of the people as the depositary of social virtues of justice and morality. Others, like Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, in the wake of Ernesto Laclau, define this phenomenon as 'an ideology that pushes a virtuous and homogeneous people against an elite, or other groups depicted as dangerous, to give voice to the people's sovereignty, rights, values, property and identity' (2008, 3).

Amplifying the discourse of fear and anger within the political scene, protest movements emphasize the common perception that democratic and institutional procedures are something useless and, in essence, intrinsically condemned to corruption. Thus, the common rhetoric is based on anti-establishment discourse and the centrality of the people against those who are perceived to have corrupted the original meaning of democracy: the power of the people. Then, although within both protest movements there is a complex articulation of beliefs held regarding institutional and electoral political participation, they are explicitly against the passive and marginal role that citizens have in public decision-making and in the global economy and politics, often perceived as forces of disaggregation and subjugation. In this context, Laclau argues that politics is now entering into its own specific core, with the advent of 'globalized capitalism' and the consequent 'proliferation of new antagonisms' that "makes traditional institutionalized forms of mediation obsolete" (Laclau, 2005: 231). Whether Laclau is right in his affirmation or not, what is clear is that 'the construction of a 'people' is the sine qua non of democratic functioning' (2005: 169) and that the "affective dimension is mobilized in the construction of political identities" (Mouffe, 2013: 137).

Claiming to represent a broad and heterogeneous 'the people', protest movements target not only on politicians and bankers, but also on the representative system, political parties, the media and many of the institutions

– that is to say, 'the system' (Vallespín, 2011: 10). Because of this, we can see the wider malaise of democracy, as it confronts the reality of the modern global political and economic system. In other words, these movements show that 'meta-questions' of democracy are at the centre of their actions. They disclose the deep, inherent and recurrent – maybe irresolvable – dichotomies in the way politics is conducted: representation versus direct democracy on the one hand, and the forms and limits of political legitimacy on the other. Thus, it can be argued that the *Indignados* identify the problem at the heart of democracy.

In this view, the *Indignados*, as well as other similar protest movements, wants to emphasize, especially through their use of emotional dimensions, the fact that democracy is entering a worrying time, not only in its procedural functioning, but more importantly in its legitimacy and in its relationship with the economic world. Movements such as the Indignados and Occupy Wall Street draw attention to this concern, through a discourse that underlines moral and civic indignation, the expression of resentment or rage, and through episodes of wrath. On the other hand, protest movements are representative of the denial of the 'there is no alternative' argument, hegemonic in the public discourse of the equilibrium of the economic system (Orlie 2009). Thus, by linking the economic and political crisis – which are seen as intertwined and seemingly going hand in hand – these phenomena show a broader political state of affairs, and fight against the political exhaustion brought by financial dominance over political domain. In this sense, a wide range of antagonistic movements reject the internalization of a sense of vain and useless of politics – generally linked to negative emotions, such as insecurity, uncertainty, fear and so forth. 2011 protest movements, linking economic crisis to a crisis of democracy, shifted the normative question of the equilibrium of the economic system to the survival of democracy as such. Other Indignados' slogans are in this sense representative of this concern (Martí i Puig, 2011).

Populist articulation	Slogan
Democracy *VS* the "system"	-'*It is not the crisis, it is the system*' ('No es la crisis, es el Sistema') -*They call it democracy, but it is not'*, ('Lo llaman democracia y no lo es') -'*Error 404: Democracy not found*' -'*The system is obsolete'* ('El sistema está obsoleto') -'*It is not a crisis, it is a scam*' ('No es una crisis, es una estafa') -'*You vote once every four years and they call it democracy'* ('Votas una vez cada cuatro años y lo llaman democracia'). -'*The Government likes it when we are silent because it seems like we do not exist'* ('Les gusta cuando callamos porque estamos como ausentes')

Table 5.5 Key slogans during the *Indignados* mobilizations in Spain. Own elaboration

In other words, liberal democracy is also criticised for having allowed the abduction of democratic politics, by financial powers and international organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund and the European Union. Given this context, one should ask if political legitimacy – specifically in its democratic form – is at stake. In this regard, Lipset famously noted:

> "Legitimacy involves the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate or proper ones for the society". (Lipset, 1959: 86)

Following Lipset's remarks on legitimacy, we might say that there is a fundamental problem in the current legitimization of politics, and of democracy in particular. Indeed, if democratic theory has suggested that democracies need trustful citizens, then this is precisely what is lacking, and protest movements expose its depth. Bringing into play the use of emotional dimension, protest movements reveal that there is a general and progressive rift between some of the political institutions, such as the State, the political parties and supranational organizations on the one hand, and the market and global dynamics on the other. In fact, liberal democracies are being carved out by the growth of global institutions, whose mechanisms are often unaccountable. Although the *Indignados* or other *Occupy* moments don't stand against the democratic form of government, it seems to be a general belief that democracy is weakened in its effectiveness in the face of contemporary globalization. Considering all this, it can be said that the current "system has lost its self-evidence, its automatic legitimacy, and now the field is open. (Žižek 2011).

What becomes apparent, in this context, is the fact that there is a deep struggle for the very legitimation of politics, and protest movements are part of it. The *Indignados* and *Occupy movements*, in other words, utilizing emotional elements and discourse, try to recuperate the collective action and find the right place where politics belong. All in all, they represent somehow an attempt to fill the 'who' of democracy, that is, re-give a deeply popular meaning to the open field of political legitimacy.

3. Conclusions

In this chapter we have focused on the study of protest and social movements giving special attention to the explicit theoretical questions these phenomena bring to the forefront. We have employed the scientific approaches oriented to

the analysis of the *symbolic* processes of collective action as both an inner character and a political consequence of protest and social movements. Here, themes such as identity and emotions resonate with the process of framing, that is the social construction of the political realm through the cognitive dynamics the same mobilizations foster. Scientific explanation of mobilization converges therefore with a broad interpretation of collective action as a factor in political change.

As result, while it becomes clear that movements are at once strategic and emotional – concretely policy-oriented as well as factors in re-framing of political reality –, we have stressed that they often open up theoretical questions about the nature of politics and democracy. Particularly focusing on some reflections about the last wave of anti-austerity movements, we have shown that the transformative power of collective mobilization is thus attested in its questioning of the current state of affairs. The critique of representative politics, the experiences of participative decision-making, and the idea of a different place for democracy, which can enable the political exercise of a truly democratic subjectivity – 'the people', the '99-percent' – are, in this sense, the theoretical criticism that protest and social movements bring to the forefront and must be recognised.

Similarly, these phenomena can be seen as examples of the contemporary vectors through which the struggle for popular and democratic legitimacy is currently being fought. They represent an immanent critique of the contemporary forms of economic and political power, and a symptom of the declining legitimacy of political and economic institutions. Therefore, by stressing their significant relevance in the current situation as well as their use of emotional vectors, we have highlighted the fundamental role of emotions in politics, particularly when it concerns the creation of political subjects – 'the people' – as well as the strife for democratic legitimacy. Considering all this, anti-austerity movements here considered – somehow

representing contemporary rage-holders or 'banks of wrath' (Sloterdijk, 2010: 62) – bring to light the fact that democracy faces an emotionally-based struggle for its very meaning. In this vein, we have seen that the relevance of emotions lies in showing the struggle for the meaning of political realm, and that studying emotions in political disciplines equips social scientists and theorists with useful theoretical tools to grasp the vectors in the legitimization of politics.

All in all, as we will show, a perspective centred on the role played by emotions can also shed light on a major point of contention in the contemporary debate in democratic theory – as we will further show in the next chapter: the peculiar and uneasy relationship between populism and democracy. Cas Mudde and Crisóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (2012b) have indeed summarized this point through a crucial question: should populism be considered as a *threat* or as a *corrective* to democracy? Or both? And under which conditions? On the one side, there are scholars and intellectual who are critical of the way populist movements claim to represent 'the people', and the general threat to liberal democratic institutions they entail. Specifically, the critique highlights the dangers of a politics that relies on charismatic leaders who invigorate 'harmful' emotions such as resentment and anger, and that attacks the practice of representation – virtually aiming at its institutional bypass –, and often contains an illiberal, and even nationalist potential (Taggart, 2000: 98; Urbinati, 2014). On the other hand, those who sustain that such a critique does not take into account the inclusionary aspect of populism. Either drawing on the Latin American experience or critically looking at the post-democratic *malaise* of European construction (e.g. Habermas, 2009; 2011; Beck, 2011), some scholar argue that essential democratic aspects, such as the same idea of popular sovereignty and the practice of representation, have been wiped out by recent alteration of liberal democracies (Crouch, 2004). In this sense, some political theorists critically engage with this debate and argue that, by representing excluded groups and fostering an egalitarian

political program, inclusionary populism has to be seen as part and parcel of a renewed democratic politics (e.g. Canovan, 1999; Laclau 2005; Mouffe, 2013; Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, 2014). Populism, in this vein, would resonate with the struggles between different conceptions of democracy, between liberals and radical theorists.

Before focusing on this particular aspect in the seventh chapter, we will, in the next chapter, deal with this debate – namely the uneasy relationship between populism and democracy – on the basis of our discourse analysis of the role of emotions in anti-austerity mobilizations. In so doing, we will be able to better address the normative questions about the relationship between democratic politics and the role of emotions.

Chapter 6. Disfiguring democracy? Populism and the *vacuum* of 'the people'

1. Introduction

The idea of democracy as the 'self-government of the people' is of public domain. However, in the political realm it is almost impossible to find a definition that is beyond debate. Democracy is not exception, and it is at the centre of the most important theoretical debates. Moreover, as we have already stressed in the previous chapter, recent anti-austerity movements resonate with different kinds of democracy, and especially with participatory and direct decision-making processes. But what about populism and its normative implications?

Although 'populism' is very frequently deployed as a negative epithet with the purpose of discrediting political opponents, depending on the geographical context its meaning and political value varies. Typically, critics of populism highlight its intrinsic demagogic practices, which involve fuelling an atmosphere of enmity and distrust towards political representatives, often playing on emotions, and making popular and unrealistic promises to the citizenry, and so forth. Indeed, this criticism has often contributed to the conflation of two concepts of populism and demagogy. While within the liberal

perspective populism is generally regarded as something to be feared and discredited, one might argue that the stigma attached to populism is itself evidence that populism exists and it has some distinct features and patterns, which are directly related to its twin/counter-concept: democracy. The relationship between these two concepts is indeed far to be easy and axiomatic. Moreover, their usage in everyday politics has exacerbated both their vagueness – populism and democracy are notoriously elusive and slippery concepts – as well as their conceptual connection.

As shown by an increasing amount of recent literature (e.g. Mudde and Rovisa Kaltwasser 2012a; Canovan, 2005; Arditi, 2007) and as we will further argue, the role and connotation of the term populism may differ depending on the political perspective. On the one hand, populism is seen as a threat to liberal democracy, to the extent that it damages some of its core values. On the other hand, positive assessments are often supported from a theoretical standpoint, which maintains firstly that populism is an essential aspect of any political articulation – populism is the "*sine qua non* requirement of the political" (Laclau, 2005a: 154) – and secondly that it also has an inclusionary potential.

In this vein, as we have mentioned in the previous chapter, some scholars have tried to answer whether populism should be considered as a *threat* or as a *corrective* to democracy, and under which conditions (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012b). While at the theoretical level, for Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser populism is essentially democratic (e.g. Canovan, 1999; Laclau, 2005a), they also show that it is ambivalent towards *liberal* democracy (e.g. Mudde, 2007**;** Plattner, 2010). In this sense, they develop an empirical position and argue that populism can be both a corrective and a threat to democracy. In this dichotomy, the central distinction between *inclusionary* and *exclusionary* populisms acquires a key relevance (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2013).

In this chapter we will delve into the relationship between populism and democracy. Specifically, on the basis of our discursive analysis of recent anti-austerity movements, we will draw on some recent accounts on this debate and argue that these theoretical insights can be useful for the aim of our research. Concretely, we will proceed as follows: we will (2) explore the relationship between populism and democracy, showing the concepts, and perspectives involved. Here, it will become clear that the idea of democracy is the point of contention. We will then (3) focus on some central questions appearing in recent literature on populist and democratic theory, concerning particularly the idea of 'the people' and the key dimension of representation. Finally (4), we will focus on the inner paradox of politics – what we call the *vacuum* of 'the people' – and asses the analysis for the following chapter, in which we will return to some normative political theories that have recently shown a strong interest in the role of emotions in the democratic-populist interaction.

2. Populism and democracy: friend and foe?

The term 'populism', like almost all political concepts, has a long history[21]. Our aim in not to examine its historical roots; nonetheless almost all scholars who focus on populism start by mentioning the historical and geographical context of its birth, and the different manifestations this phenomenon has had. It seems that grounding the concept in concrete contexts is somehow a step to deal with the term's elusiveness and ambiguity – a problem related to both

[21] The origin of the term 'populism' is obviously related to the term 'the people' and it is generally seen as directly linked to the changing meaning of 'democracy' in the first half of the 19th century. Particularly, the term 'populism' arises at the end of the 19th century, during an era in which the notion of 'the people' becomes a key word of modern politics and 'democracy' tends to be positively valued. In this context two political movements are worth noting: the Populist Party in the United States and the so-called *Narodniki* in Russia (Canovan 1981: 5-6). For more details on the history of populism, see for instance Germani (1978), Ionescu and Gellner (1969), Mudde (2002), Taggart (2000).

'conceptual travelling' (i.e. the application of a concept to different cases and contexts) and the 'conceptual stretching' (i.e. when a concept does not fit some cases) (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012b: 10). Although this might be true – and we think it is – the theoretical problems related to the concept of populism still persist in every scientific (and non-scientific) approach to the subject. Populism, as well as other political ideas, is a contested concept, and there is no consensus on its very definition.

As we have seen in the third chapter, many scholars attempt to find a minimal, rigorous and yet flexible definition for the concept, in order to employ it in comparative research across cases and over time. Despite this effort in the recent literature, a rather pessimistic conclusion is shared by almost all scholars working on populism, who stress the essential contestability of the concept as well as the important differences between existing approaches to populism. As Canovan has pointed out, the term remains extremely vague "and refers in different contexts to a bewildering variety of phenomena" (Canovan 1981: 3). In this vein, exploring the nature of populism, she also admits that it can be "doubted whether it could be said to mean anything at all' (Canovan 1981: 5; Canovan, 1982: 544).

Nonetheless, the differences between the various approaches within scholarly debates do not exclude the presence of a common concern: the theoretical and empirical relationship between populism and democracy. How should we evaluate the normative character of populism, and its relationship with democracy? These are daunting questions for scholars of populism, who have never been able to reach a consensus on the interpretation of this political phenomenon and its relationship to democracy. As we have already mentioned, the core concepts of populism are indeed essentially related to democracy and democratic politics. Concepts such as 'the people', popular sovereignty, and representation, among others, are at the centre of both ideas of populism and democracy. Yet, we will show that the articulation of these

concepts within the ideas of populism and democracy is exactly their point of contention and friction.

In the brief discourse analysis of recent anti-austerity movements we have developed in the previous chapter, we have highlighted the applicability of a formal approach to populism, according to which populism is characterized by a political logic that considers society essentially divided into two opposed groups, 'the people' and 'the elite'. At the centre of this perspective, as well as for the almost totality of other approaches, there is the idea that populism in modern democracies first and foremost correspond to an appeal to 'the people' against the established structure of power (Canovan, 1999: 3). Additionally, underlying this agonistic logic, the theoretical and discourse analysis we have previously outlined allows us to insist on the relationship between populism and democracy, highlighting especially the considerations of some authors, such as Ernesto Laclau and Margaret Canovan.

Although they have developed different theoretical positions, both authors articulated strong arguments that maintained the idea of a deep relationship between populism and democracy. In fact, both authors stated that populism belongs to the democratic horizon, since it mobilizes two basic functions: polarization and simplification of the social complexity, and the incorporation of the largest majority in one collective subject: 'the people'. On the one hand, Margaret Canovan argues that populism is a form of 'politics of faith' that aims at correcting normal institutionalised politics. In this context, people's mobilization would be a redemptive force of democracy because its very meaning is "bringing politics to the people" (Canovan, 2002: 26). Canovan indeed states:

> "I have argued that reflections on populism illuminate the inescapable ambiguity of democracy. The tension between its two faces is a perpetual invitation to populist mobilization. But attempts to escape into a purely pragmatic interpretation of democracy are illusory, for the power and

> legitimacy of democracy as a pragmatic system continues to depend at least partly on its redemptive elements. That always leaves room for the populism that accompanies democracy like a shadow". (Canovan, 1999: 16)

Similarly, Ernesto Laclau additionally argues that populism operates through the merging of different popular claims, discontents and demands, and thus resonates with a process of counter-hegemonic struggle against the power bloc. In this sense, populism would possibly be a more egalitarian or democratic politics than the formal, liberal one (Laclau, 1977: 18).

On the other hand, from a liberal standpoint Nadia Urbinati (2014) has recently focused on this issue and criticised Laclau's support of populism, arguing that the polarization of the totality of the social field he prefigures contributes to create an ideology of the people less inclusive than democratic citizenship. Populism does not suggest, in her account, a politics of inclusion; rather it prefigures a politics of exclusion. Since the concept of the people is essentially identified with a specific portion of the people, 'the people' – the pivoting entity of populism – cannot be more democratic than the citizen(s) as sovereign actor(s) in a liberal democratic context. Hence, Urbinati thinks of populism as a phenomenon that is parasitical on representative democracy, which is its true and radical target. In this sense, she argues *contra* Laclau, affirming that populism does not produce more democratic politics – at least not necessarily. According to Urbinati – as we will further argue below – populism is not only defined by its political style and discourse; properly speaking, populism is an attempt to implement a political agenda whose main features are in collision with liberalism and the principles of constitutional democracy, in particular minority rights, division of powers, and party pluralism.

All in all, regardless of the theoretical and political standpoint one adopts, populism and democracy seem to be strictly – and inevitably – linked together.

Benjamin Arditi (2004) famously argued in his dialogue with Margaret Canovan, that populism not only follows democracy like a shadow, rather more accurately like a spectre. Populism emerges as a product of the very existence of democracy, illuminating its very boundaries.

> "To put it in a schematic manner, and drawing from psychoanalysis, we can depict this mode of populism as the return of the repressed, as a symptom of democracy – as an internal element of the democratic system that also reveals the limits of the system and prevents its closure in the presumed normality of institutional procedures" (Arditi, 2007: 74).

As stressed by Benjamin Arditi, populism flourishes within democracy as its fellow traveller. Nonetheless, the relationship between populism and democracy seems more an issue of contention rather than compatibility:

> "As a symptom of democracy, populism functions as a paradoxical element that belongs to democracy – they both endorse the public debate of political issues, electoral participation, informal forms of expression of the popular will, and so on – and at the same time interrupts its closure as a gentrified or domesticated political order". (Arditi, 2007: 77)

Thus, Arditi argues that populism functions as a symptom of democratic politics in two senses. First, as a promise of redemption and reaction against 'normal' institutionalized politics, populism claims to expand the scope of citizen involvement in public affairs. Second, populism also positions itself in the edges of democratic politics, "in a grey area where it is not always easy to distinguish populist mobilization from mob rule" (2007: 81).

Beyond the consideration on the merit of populist forms of politics, what emerges is that the controversial debate around the relationship between

populism and democracy is far to be simple. Putting emphasis especially on the theoretical level of the analysis will help us to show the broad implications of what is involved: the struggle between different conceptions of democracy. If on a general note it is clear that one cannot exclude possible anti-democratic allegations of popular demands and populist articulation – the risk of democratic collapse is intrinsic to democracy itself –, nonetheless the relationship between populism and democracy directly points to the theoretical and practical struggle between different theories of democracy. This debate first and foremost refers to the various 'models' of democracy, and particularly the dichotomy between liberal and radical theories.

On the one hand, those who follow a Schumpeterian conceptualization of democracy, understood as method by which rulers are selected in competitive elections. On this basis, liberal democracy – although rich in variants – has been mainly developed on the assumption that some *minima criteria* must take place to define a political regime as democratic. Starting from the idea that the term 'democracy' represents an ideal political system that does not really exist in the real world, Dahl's notion of 'polyarchy' denotes those regimes in the real world that ensure certain minimal standards (Dahl, 1971: 8), especially for what concerns public contestation and political participation. In this sense, according to Dahl, in liberal democracy both majority rule and the defence of minority rights are essential. On the other hand those who, especially in the wake of heterodox Marxism, insist on normative alternatives to the current liberal model of democracy. Being an influential reference in this regard, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, for instance, have highlighted the contingent historical articulation of the liberal and democratic tradition. According to this view, the conciliation of liberal principles, such as the rule of law, individual rights, etc., and democratic values, such as the idea of popular sovereignty, equality, etc., is the result of political and never-ending struggles (Mouffe, 2000). In this line, criticising the liberal 'sacralization' of consensus, this perspective also wants to acknowledge the inevitable conflictual

dimension of politics, and populism is somehow the concrete manifestation of this. Hence, the idea of 'agonistic pluralism' (Mouffe, 2005b) acquires relevance: radical theorists argue that political antagonism – the power struggle made up also of passions and affects – although it can be tamed, cannot be eliminated from the political scene, and normatively, should be take into account as the main driver of democracy.

However, we will not delve specifically into the normative level of this debate here, as it is not the aim of this research. We will rather stress the key concepts around which the theoretical and empirical dispute is conducted. Drawing on some liberal critiques, we will here place emphasis on some inherent paradoxes of populism – hence of democracy.

3. Dangers, paradoxes, and boundaries

Focusing on a theoretical level of analysis does not mean that the relationship between populism and democracy causes any empirical repercussion. On the contrary, focusing on the empirical horizon could possibly help to better deal with the theoretical debate. In this sense, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2012) try to bridge the gap between pure normative analyses and empirical and comparative studies. Using a minimal definition of liberal democracy, they aim at analysing in which ways populism can be considered a corrective and/or a threat *to the quality* of democracy, its positive and negative effects. Drawing on Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino's (2005) account – which makes a distinction between three dimensions of the quality of democracy: procedure, content, and result – Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser think that populism can strengthen political participation, but potentially weakens public contestation (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012a). If on the one hand, populism may support and increase political participation by the *inclusion* of marginalized groups in society, on the other hand it may limit the political

space for contestation, since it moves towards a *centralization* of power and consequently damages the liberal division of powers. Although it has been argued (Kazin, 1998) that populism is a democratic expression of politics that, without calling the entire system into question, is particularly needed to rebalance political power to benefit of the people, it becomes clear that the peculiar vector populism is built around is the perennial tension between, on the one hand, popular will and majoritarianism and, on the other hand, constitutional mechanism and 'checks and balances'.

Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser argue that this tension is directly related to the inner contradiction of liberal democracy, that is the strain between, on the one hand, the promise of majority rule and, on the other hand, the constitutional protection of minority rights (see also Mény and Surel, 2002). In this vein, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser go further asking under which circumstances populism becomes a corrective rather than a threat for (liberal) democracy. By operating with two key variables – namely the distinction between populism in government, and populism in opposition on the one hand, and consolidated and unconsolidated democracies on the other hand – they suggest a series of hypotheses: Populism in government has stronger and more negative effects on democracy than populism in opposition; populism has stronger effects on unconsolidated democracies than on consolidated ones. Within this context, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser believe that populism represents a challenge for liberal democracy. Within this context, populism would be on the side of majority rule and hostile towards pluralism, as it relies on the idea of the existence of 'a general will of the people'.

On a similar note, Nadia Urbinati has recently argued (2014) that populism in government has deep and severe effects on liberal democracy. In *Democracy Disfigured. Opinion, Truth and the People*, Urbinati focuses especially on the role of opinion and will formation, as a key element for a liberal – proceduralist – vision of democracy. Democracy, she states, involves a

permanent struggle between different opinions and demands of citizens. This struggle is essential to democracy, to the extent that opinion is the fundamental basis for modern democracy and its electoral procedures. Given this context, Urbinati supports a model of democracy in which citizens' opinion and will formation must not collapse into one another. If it occurs, then democracy can be disfigured. Urbinati identifies three types of democratic disfiguration, which come from the inner potential enemies of democracy – which means enemies of free opinion of citizenry: the unpolitical, the populist, and the plebiscitarian disfigurations. Each of these horizons challenges key liberal principles on citizens' opinion and will formation. Whether unpolitical democracy delegitimizes political opinion in favour of technocratic expertise, and the plebiscitary democracy overvalues the mediatic, and 'aesthetic' aspects of opinion, populist democracy radically polarizes the public forum in which opinion is created. The problem with populism is that opinion and will formation collapse into the figure of the people. For Urbinati, the people can and should be understood as a plurality, that is never at one with itself and only exists through representations of it. In this sense, Urbinati is sceptical of both left-wing and right-wing populism.

Urbinati's analysis is particularly interesting for our purpose, and helps us to uncover some central paradoxes of democracy, and their relationship with populism. At the outset, as Urbinati bears in mind, it is convenient to differentiate protests and political movements from populism in power. Although recent anti-austerity movements, she argues, fit inside the formal sketch of populist discourse, they are not yet populism because they are not organised enough in order to gain power at government level. Although Urbinati does not disclaim some possible fluidity between popular movements and populism – and therefore clear-cut distinctions may be problematic – she argues that the discursive polarization between 'the people' and the elite is not enough to consider contentious mobilizations such as we have lately witnessed as completely populism (2014: 129). Urbinati underlines the

central feature of charismatic leadership that can transform the populist movement into a populist system.

Grounding her theoretical analyses on some historical examples – she points to Napoleon's demagogic strategy, as well as Mussolini and Berlusconi caesarism –, and recuperating ancient rhetorical and political figures – the *populous,* demagoguery, etc. –, she outlines both the profound roots of populism and the deep consequences of the relationship between populism and democracy. In this sense, briefly considering the European experience, Urbinati argues that populism as a distinctive form of political phenomenon, although borrowing central political concepts from ancient traditions, was born in the representative and constitutional age. Seeing European populism as often being characterized as a right-wing form of politics, Urbinati affirms that populism has never aimed at implementing the promises of constitutional democracy, but has disfigured them instead.

Mainly drawing on a series of authors, such as Norberto Bobbio, Margaret Canovan, Claude Lefort, and Benjamin Arditi, Urbinati sets out a series of general assumptions. Firstly, populism is both internal and critical to representative democracy, its formal procedures and institutions. In this sense, populism is a permanent possibility within representative democracy, although it can be a danger for its development. Moreover, Urbinati draws a direct parallelism between populism and demagoguery: the former is to representative democracy what the latter was to direct democracy: internal to it and parasitical on it[22]. Populism is then to be seen as an ideology of the people that, in spite of its use of democratic concepts, is in opposition with real

[22] Urbinati often makes use of parallels between ancient and modern forms of democracy. According to Aristotle's pivotal analysis, demagoguery within democracy is: a) a permanent possibility insofar as it relies upon the public use of speech and opinion as democracy; b) a more intense use of the principle of the majority so as to make it almost absolute or a form of power more than a method for making decisions (populism is the rule of the majority rather than a politics that uses majority rule); and c) a waiting room for a possibly tyrannical regime.

and existing democracies. Considering all this, Urbinati thinks that it can be potentially dangerous for liberal and constitutional democracy: the ultimate effect of populism can be reached when it leads to the centralization of power, weakening of checks and balances, disregarding political oppositions, and transforming elections into a plebiscite for the leader. If a populist movement succeeds in dominating the democratic state, Urbinati argues, populism may also modify its figure radically and open the door to an exit from democracy (2014: 170).

The dangers of populism, therefore, seem clearly related to the role and function one gives to the political subject 'the people'. Citizens' opinions and will formation – in Urbinati's terms – are at the centre of the dispute. Before continuing the examination of the uneasy relationship between populism and democracy, we will focus on two interrelated questions, which represent at once the paradox and the boundaries of democratic politics.

3.1 Who is 'the people'? The paradox of politics

Populism, one might argue, attempts to resolve the 'paradox of politics' which is determining 'who' constitutes the people. (e.g. Frank, 2010: 5) But who are the 'people' who form the ultimate source of political authority? No simple answer to this fundamental question can be taken for granted.

Nowadays, the term 'the people' has assumed new visibility in recent decades, saturating the grammar of many actors and political phenomena. At least at the European level, the semantics of 'the people' is present in the wide ideological-political spectrum (Mény and Surel, 2000), since in both (extreme) right-wing and (extreme) left-wing poles we find examples of this. The ubiquity of the term points to the success of the concept and to its ambiguity. In fact, 'the people' can mean many different things in many different

circumstances (e.g. Canovan, 1981; Mudde, 2004). It can refer, for instance, to peasants, the working class, the electorate, the nation, and so forth.

Moreover, Juan Francisco Fuentes identifies the three dimensions that are intrinsic to the notion of people: the political, the social and the moral dimensions. The political dimension, firstly, is explicit when thinking of the people as representing the sovereign subject and the source of legitimacy. The social dimension, in turn, is reflected in the extent to which the people represent the cluster or set of groups, communities or social classes. Finally, the moral dimension is given as 'the people' is seen as made up of different virtues, passions and vices. In this sense, 'the people' often represents the natural and the original of a community and is generally given a positive value because it is perceived as something authentic that must be rescued and valued above all other dimensions of social life (Fuentes, 2004: 98).

In this context, it is appropriate to note the problematic value that the term 'the people' has always assumed in the political discourse. Indeed, many authors emphasize the polysemic value of the term 'the people'. Raphael Samuel (1984: 23) notes that the people "is a word whose meaning has as many nuances as applications have the term". Other authors emphasize the ambiguity and the indetermination of the term: Pierre Rosanvallon (1998: 32) reminds us of the words of Mirabeau in 1789, "*le mot peuple signifie nécessairement ou trop ou trop peu [...] c'est un mot qui se prêt à tout*"; Margaret Canovan (1984) also underscores the elasticity of the notion of the word 'the people'. Ernesto Laclau argues that "the people is a concept without a defined theoretical status: despite its frequent use in political discourse, its conceptual precision remains exclusively at the allusive or metaphorical level" (Laclau, 1977: 165).

What seems clear is that, studying populism and its relationship with democracy means dealing with the question of the 'who' of politics. In this

sense one is confronted by the uses and the role of the signifier 'the people', and the ways in which it has been articulated and politically theorized throughout time and space, as well as both idealized and demonized. A historical and conceptual reconstruction would certainly shed much light on the variability of the term and its political significance. However, it is impossible for us to offer an exhaustive historical and conceptual picture of the term 'the people'. We will mainly draw on Canovan's (2005) seminal contribution, in order to sketch some central aspects of the notion, and its value for the debate we are dealing with.

The definition of the term 'the people' is controversial and leads to conceptual ambiguity. "The blurred boundaries of the people reflect conflicts and dilemmas that continue to bedevil democratic politics" (Canova, 2005: 3). In this context, according to Canovan the concept of the people involves two problematic horizons. The first one is that the same term the 'people' produces a division between two separated and differentiated communities, ourselves and others. Asking who belongs to the people means interrogating the borders of the political community, thereby defining an inside and an outside of communal space limiting and defining the political subject. Although it seems clear that the external borders of a state – or a national or regional community – do not automatically correspond to the boundaries of a people, its concept intrinsically needs an external definition. The second question is that internally the situation is as complex as externally. It is evident, at the outset, that the term "has meant both the whole political community and some smaller group within it" (Canovan, 2005: 5), such as the excluded, the poor, and so forth. In this context, is seems accurate to affirm that, throughout history, 'the people' has functioned as a sign of the internal division of every political community between a part and a whole, between the few and the many, and those governing and those governed, and so forth. In sum, an ambiguous political identity that "cannot be included in the whole of which it is a part and […] cannot belong to the set in which it is always

already included. Hence the contradictions and aporias to which it gives rise every time that it is evoked and put into play on the political scene" (Agamben, 1998: 178)

It is also interesting to note that, throughout history, this intrinsic ambiguity of 'the people' – and the political theories that operate through it – have caused paradoxical outcomes. On the one hand, appeals to it permitted the elevation of the 'people' into the basic democratic subjectivity and allowed the inclusion of the popular strata and their demands within the political community. On the other hand, it stands for the idea of the dangers involved in mass mobilizations as well as the idealization of 'the people' as a political subject, and the belief of its factual presence in politics. In this sense Claude Lefort (1988) foresaw the paradoxical risks contained within democratic government, and its aspiration of materializing the sovereign collective – not yet as characterized by pluralism – but as if it were a homogenous actor. In the wake of Tocqueville's critique of democracy, Lefort thinks that the democratic subject, 'the people', is an abstraction – a contentless and unstable notion that is even more abstract than 'the majority' – and as such, cannot be assumed as effectively governing itself. In this way the locus of rule in a democracy is void of real people – it is an 'empty place' as Lefort calls it:

> "Democracy inaugurates the experience of an ungraspable, uncontrollable society in which the people will be said to be sovereign, of course, but whose identity will constantly be open to question, whose identity will remain latent" (Lefort, 1988: 304).

If, with Lefort, one might argue that the emptying of the space of political power is an historical event – he emphasizes this through the example of the French Revolution – it is nonetheless interesting the process of filling this space. Lefort normatively thinks that democracy is especially susceptible to demagogy: since the political power in it is 'empty', democracy permanently risks turning to tyranny when a populist demagogue or an autocratic political

party manages to 'fill' the empty space by claiming to embody 'the people'

However, referring to the contemporary debates about populism, Michael Kazin shows that in the context of the American Revolution the idea of "We the people' initially functioned more as an incantation than a description of a concrete reality, as an empty signifier designating the whole of the community: "it indicated who the ultimate sovereign was but did not specify who was actually to rule the nation" (Kazin, 1998: 13).

Margaret Canovan, for her part, notes the peculiar characteristic of 'the people' as sovereign power, and its location between action and myth (2005: 105, 124)[23]. If on the one hand the people embodies the founding, mythical idea of a political community that gives life to a legitimate order, on the other hand it is problematic to conceive this same community in action: how can 'the people' exercise its sovereignty? Is the representation the only mechanism through which it can act politically?

3.2 Representing 'the people'? The boundaries of democracy

The question of representation, then, becomes central to any analysis of 'the people', populism, and democracy. Indeed, it has been argued that populism, in its different forms, exhibits a strong reservation and hostility to the mechanisms of representation (Mény and Surel, 2002). The usual way of dealing with this is to say that populism is the result of a crisis of representation; populism is considered as a response to either the incapacity or the refusal of elites to respond to people's concerns. Beyond this, there seems to be an inner concern. In the name of the 'will of the people' – which is often translated into the 'will of electors'), populism may seek a more genuine

[23] Although Edmund Morgan's idea of 'the people' as a fiction (1988: 15, 75, 78-93), invented and used by political elites for their own purposes, could appear similar to Canovan's argument, she does not completely agree with him. (2005: 130).

identification between the represented and the representatives. However, the objection that "the people cannot rule as a corporate body" is confronted by the simple fact that elections, referenda and other similar moments of political participation are the *sine qua non* for the legitimacy of representatives in that they enable voters to act as if such a corporate body existed (Stanley, 2008). Moreover, returning to Bourdieu's argument of 'symbolic power', Canovan (2005: 133) stresses the idea that a group can "exist only by delegating power to a spokesperson who will bring it into existence by speaking for it, that is, on its behalf and in its place" (Bourdieu, 1991: 249).

In this context, Pierre Rosanvallon in his *Le peuple introuvable* (1998) has rightly observed that the great absentee of modern liberal democracy is – paradoxically – 'the people'. While 'the people' as a political subject is given a creative, and legitimizing role in political institutions, it then 'liquefies' itself in the same institutional machinery it is built (Duso, 2004: 107; Manin, 1997: 174). Through the fundamental abstraction of the universality of the people, democracy necessarily enters the mechanism of representation. Hence, democracy belongs to this basic modern alienation: the legal and universal citizenship is not – as logic goes – the government of 'the people', but the government on behalf of the universality of the people, carried out by its representatives.

In this context, then, two things become clear. The first one is that, as highlighted by Canovan, the appeal to 'the people' is an unavoidable aspect of modern political practice. Drawing on Oakeshott's distinction between the 'politics of faith' and the 'politics of scepticism', she insists that the 'redemptive' and 'pragmatic' faces of democracy are "opposed, [yet] are also interdependent" (Canovan, 1999: 9). The second thing is that, as stressed by liberal theorists, populism infiltrates the tension between the will formation – in the construction of a political subject – and its representation. Liberal criticisms towards populism show indeed that the latter is essentially

impatient with the dialectic between pluralism and unity that the mechanism of representation involves. Canovan has stressed that "a vision of 'the people' as a united body implies impatience with party strife, and can encourage support for strong leadership where a charismatic individual is available to personify the interests of the nation" (Canovan, 1999: 5).

Urbinati, for her part, insist on this line on the fact that populism, when it achieves state power, can be very inimical to representative democracy. Populism is in her view 'parasitical' on representative democracy, as far as it is internal to it and it competes with its meaning and use of representation, as well as the way of affirming and enabling the 'will of the people'. In this sense, although temporal and spatial contexts are important variables, Urbinati affirms that populism is more than a historically contingent phenomenon, and it belongs to the very interpretation of democracy, and the function of 'the people' within it. She supports in this sense a democratic proceduralism that acknowledges that citizens have the right to make bad decisions, while in her account populism presumes that 'the people' is always right.

> "Populists' strive for an all-encompassing unity of the people beyond procedures and against political representation denies and harasses disagreement instead of overcoming it. Procedural democracy offers instead an antagonistic stance that takes dissent as the main feature of social relations, and expects politics and procedures to reflect it meaningfully" (Saffon and Urbinati, 2013: 442).

Although Urbinati affirms that her argument is akin to Chantal Mouffe's notion of agonistic democracy – in that it positively values the existence and persistence of diverse and conflictive perspectives in the political arena –, she differs from Mouffe's critique of democratic procedures and her claim that democratic antagonism entails the construction of an agonistic relationship between 'us/them'– a divide that Urbinati thinks as dependent on extraprocedural principles, and that seems to be an operation of simplification

of the complexity of social realm. This observation suggests to her that populism does not create people's sovereignty – as it is often claimed by its supporters – but appears once the people's sovereignty already exists and is 'secured' in a constitution. Thus, populism is to be seen as an ideology of the people that belongs to a political order in which the people is formally already the sovereign.

Urbinati, therefore, concludes that populism is an expression of extreme majoritarianism – which potentially can become despotic, in so far as it leads to plebiscitarian forms of politics. While from a normative point of view it seems that representative democracy secures a broader range of political possibilities than populism – and thus pursue a project of democratization –, it does not mean that liberal democracy is exempt of criticisms: distribution of power and social and economic inequalities are key concerns to face. At any rate, what becomes clear is that the representation of 'the people' is a central – often paradoxical – element within democratic context. Regardless of whether one agrees with the liberal position Urbinati defends – that is, populism ultimately is a violation of liberal democracy –, it becomes patent that populism is a permanent possibility within the democratic process.

In sum, whether or not one takes a stand and thinks that 'the people' effectively exists, somewhere behind the mundane surface of everyday politics" and is "the ultimate source of authority" (Canovan, 2005: 138), it seems clear that 'the people' confers legitimacy on any political issue – the political regime, constitutions, borders, concrete policies, etc. – and therefore all those who want to be legitimized must appeal to the people or pretend to speak on their behalf. This means that liberal democracy – practically based on politics of scepticism' – cannot do without a modicum of 'the politics of faith' (Canovan, 2005: 138).

4. Populism and the *vacuum*

What these considerations show is the fact that there is an unavoidable paradox of democracy. We have already affirmed that the 'paradox of politics'[24] is given by the indetermination of 'who' constitutes the people. More precisely, it consists in a sort of *vacuum*, derived from the mechanism of abstraction democratic subjectivity has entered. As far as it has been argued up to now, populism makes this emptiness visible and, at once, attempts to fill this vacuum. As we have seen, while formal and proceduralist liberal approaches assume this emptiness, populism tends to supply a substantial-ontological answer to the 'who' of politics – or, more accurately, states that this ontological trends (in the form of collective identifications) is somehow inevitable. Populism's first aim, then, consists in filling out the empty space of democracy (Laclau, 2005a: 168), and liberal approaches have stressed the potential danger of this operation. What is clear is that there is a fundamental problem within democracy, and it is related to the constitution of the people. While claiming for 'the people' is a way of filling this emptiness, liberal theory, for its part, overstates the historical interpretation of the constitution and legitimacy of the people as a historical event, rather focusing almost exclusively on the legitimacy of government[25].

Drawing on Panizza's advice to distinguish 'populism in the streets' from 'populism in power' (2000: 190), Urbinati argues that populism in its nascent form can play a democratizing role, insofar as it often leads to mobilization and helps the critique of existent state of affairs, and forms of political representation. However, once in power populism can have significant

[24] Certainly not the only paradox, but perhaps one of the deepest and unsolvable paradoxes of politics.

[25] An interesting argument has been advanced in this sense by Sofia Näsström who underlines the shortcoming of the liberal interpretation in current debates around political and democratic legitimacy, in so far as it does not account well for the constitution of 'the people', considered as merely a contigent and historical event. (2007: 638)

negative effects on democracy. Populism, we have underlined, competes with representative democracy on the very meaning of representation. Since its aim is to reach a more genuine identification between the represented and the representatives, populism operates through a process of people's unification, understood as a better form of representation. Here, the question of leadership is of central importance. The central figure of the leader is indeed a core aspect for every theorist of populism: populism and the politics of personality go hand with hand. This also leads us to the fact that, while there is certainly a process of polarization of the social and the political field, there is also a process of verticalization, brought about by the presence of a charismatic leader. Again, this move has been interpreted as a radical challenge to representative democracy (Urbinai, 2014: 155). Following Rosanvallon's argument (2006), Urbinati argues that populism can lead to the most devastating corruption of democracy, since it radically downturns representative institutions, and drastically polarizes the social realm, depicting democracy essentially as a conflict between two different and potentially hegemonic positions that merge the plurality of opinions into two antagonistic blocs.

At any rate, beyond the concrete judgment on the matter, what all perspectives recognise is the fact that, whereas normatively the act of filling the vacuum can be dangerous, at the same time it is an essential – and inevitable – process that belongs to the democratic process. Analogously to the 'redemptive' aspect of modern politics underlined by Canovan (1999), the filling of the vacuum is inherent in the idea of popular sovereignty, and belongs to the idea of the 'will of the people' as the foundation of any legitimate action. As we have already partly seen through the example of the anti-austerity movements, redemption resonates with a series of elements, brought to the forefront by other scientific traditions: the perception of an injustice, identity formation – specifically the democratic subjectivity –, and the transformation of all this in action.

Within populist discourse, in fact, 'the will of the people' is generally interpreted as belonging to two ideas: political majoritarianism and moral authenticity. The invocation of authenticity and ordinariness is a key aspect of populism's appeal to the people. In this vein, this populist operation towards authenticity would resonate with what Paul Taggart (2000: 95) has called 'heartland'. Dealing with the slippery concept of 'the people', Taggart makes use of this term as a mythical ideal of a given population, an 'imagined community'. In fact, populists seek to emphasise their physical proximity to the people and distance from the elites, and portray themselves as those who resonate with the reason, emotions and 'truth' of the ordinary people. 'The people' is conceived of as a homogeneous entity, and all 'ordinary' men and women have a shared interest in their opposition to the elite.

Although the critique that liberalism raises towards populism affirms that there is an intrinsic danger in a politics that relies on a charismatic leader who invigorates 'harmful' emotions such as resentment and anger, still emotional factors play a fundamental role. Authenticity, in this sense, becomes a pivotal axe around which other emotional dynamics converge and contribute in the construction of the identity formation. Moreover, as we have seen, recent anti-austerity movements resonates with a populist 'move', bringing into play a manifest use of the emotional dimension, and polarizing the political field in opposed blocs. The aim is, as we have argued, is to fill the emptiness of 'the people'.

In the previous chapter we have focused on the discursive level, aiming at 'registering' the role of emotions in the essential contestability of political concepts – especially those related to the idea and practice of democracy –, here we have grounded the theoretical reflection in populism and democratic theory. We have seen that even within political theories the articulation of a political discourse takes place around what we can call empty signifiers.

Liberal and radical perspectives tend to fill such emptiness, and are therefore in a 'articulatory' struggle for the 'matter' of these empty signifiers. Anti-austerity movements, resonating with these debates, somehow represent an attempt to fill the *empty signifiers* of popular sovereignty and democracy.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter we have focused on a problematic horizon that recent anti-austerity movements bring to the forefront: the uneasy relationship between populism and democracy. We have outlined the theoretical and empirical consequences involved, presenting different perspectives and approaches of analysis. Taking up the inquiry of Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser – and their question about the *threatening* or as a *corrective* nature of populism for democracy –, we have dealt with the intellectual tradition that sees populism as a threat to liberal democracy, to the extent that it damages some of its core values. At the same time we have highlighted the positive assessments offered by those who maintain that populism is an essential aspect of any political articulation.

Our argument was intended to show the inner, and fundamental tension in the relationship between democracy and populism. Particularly drawing on recent literature on the matter, we have focused on the 'paradoxes' of democracy, as well as on the location and function of 'the people'. Moreover, although from a normative point of view, liberal criticisms have the merit of underlying some inaccuracies of populist theory, we affirm that it partly fails to capture the role of emotions within politics – and the way in which they operate in the discursive filling of the *vacuum* of democracy. Indeed, as we have partly shown through our discursive analysis of recent anti-austerity mobilizations, emotions have an evocative role in the struggle for popular sovereignty; a role that formal approaches hardly grasp. Nonetheless, different kinds of analyses,

such as those of Canova, Urbinati, and Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, contribute to the analytical task of clarifying the extent and the cogency of contemporary political theories and their usefulness in the understanding of the current phenomena we have studied.

Therefore, in order to continue our research, in the next chapter we will return to the normative questions about the role of emotions in the democratic domain. Particular attention will be paid to the agonistic approach – developed by a series of authors, and especially by Chantal Mouffe –, which represents an interesting normative standpoint on this matter.

Chapter 7. Agonism and the role of passions: conflict, populism, and the struggle for democracy

1. Introduction

The relationship between populism and democracy is at the centre of the contemporary political debate, and recent anti-austerity mobilizations resonate, among other things, with this issue. Taking up the inquiry of Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2012), we have specifically outlined the theoretical consequences involved, and highlighted the two main scientific positions. On the one hand, the intellectual tradition that sees populism as a threat to liberal democracy, to the extent that it damages some of its core values. On the other hand, the positive assessments offered by those who maintain that populism is an essential aspect of any political articulation and can have progressive outcomes. Moreover, stressing the inner and fundamental 'paradoxes' of democracy, as uncovered by the relationship between democracy and populism, is a way to further delve into the theoretical questions the recent anti-austerity mobilization bring to the forefront. As well, outlining the main arguments in this matter allows us to go back to the core value of emotions, which are deeply related to this debate. As we have mentioned, if liberal criticisms about populist theory have the merit of underscoring some of its inaccuracies, they seems to partly fail in capturing the role of the affective dimension within politics – and the way in which it contributes to the process that we have referred to as the discursive filling of the *vacuum* of democracy. Bearing all that in mind, the question of how emotions play a role in this

process – which has been partially addressed through the discourse analysis – is again at the centre of this chapter.

Here we will go back to considering the normative issues about emotion, especially putting emphasis on the recent democratic developments that have contributed fruitful insights regarding the place and role of emotions in democracy. In this sense we will draw particularly on the work of Chantal Mouffe and her agonistic approach, in which passions are essentially involved in the conception of democracy and the conflictive nature of politics. The idea is to see if and to what extent her perspective offers fruitful insights to the understanding of the role of emotions, especially regarding the problem we are facing with. For this purpose we will sketch the agonistic democratic account Mouffe develops throughout her work, particularly highlighting some central aspects and notions that we think worthy of note for our research. Here, we will put emphasis on concepts such as conflict, passion and agonism, trying to underline their link and to show how they can be useful for an understanding of both the political role of emotions within democracy, and the same debate about populism and democracy. In this sense, it will become clear that the conflictual vision of politics Mouffe develops, as one of her main contribution to democratic theory, is directly linked to her vision of human passions, which are in turn at the centre of any possible democratic articulation.

While, as we will clarify below, Mouffe struggles to overcome the (perhaps inescapable) dichotomy between reason and emotions, her agonistic account – this is our argument – can contribute to move beyond the pure normative conceptualization of the role of emotions in the political field. In fact, a critical engagement with the agonistic approach allows a shift of attention from the interplay between emotions and reason for democratic purposes – and the concern of what kind of emotional engagement liberal and democratic regimes need – to another way of conceptualizing the political field that, while

fostering the liberal and democratic form of society, shows the contingent, discursive, and conflictual struggles over its own interpretation. This also is, in our view, a valuable contribution of Mouffe's perspective to the understanding of recent anti-austerity mobilization.

Although Mouffe's account is not free from criticism, the aim is to link the advantages of assuming an agonistic vision in the democratic debate arisen from the recent anti-austerity movements. As much as political theories, these phenomena tend to fill the political emptiness, being in an 'articulatory' struggle for the 'matter' of politics itself. While through a discursive analysis of recent anti-austerity mobilizations we have briefly shown the role of emotions in the contention for the meaning of political concepts, we now translate this issue to a more theoretical level. We will draw on the agonistic account therefore with special lens for these debates and the conceptualization of the role of emotions in the struggle for popular sovereignty. In this chapter, then, we will firstly outline the general perspective of agonism, and its focus on conflict, and passions (2). After highlighting briefly the core aspects of this approach, we will specifically consider its usefulness for what concern this study (3).

2. Conflict, passion and agonistic democracy

Conflict is a central issue in contemporary democratic theory. It can be interpreted as a cleavage around which different conceptions of democracy have been developed. In an extreme effort of simplification: on the one hand those who take conflict as the horizon democracy has to overcome; on the other hand, those who think that conflict must find a productive place within democracy. The former approach includes a series of perspectives, such as classical liberal, pluralist and deliberative theories. The latter can be seen as belonging to the broad range of radical perspectives. Needless to say that one

has to be aware not to read theories of democracy – both liberal and radical – as homogeneous *corpi* of literature, nor to consider any author or to interpret any theoretical approach as a homogeneous whole[26].

Beyond this extreme simplification – which implies, admittedly, skipping the myriads of nuances – the point is to highlight the central function of conflict in political and democratic theory. Contemporary authors such as Chantal Mouffe, James Tully, Claude Lefort, and William Connolly in particular have focused on a 'productive' idea of conflict, and conceptualise theoretical positions that do not see conflict as a problem for democracy, rather one of its qualities. In this context, one common supposition is that the constitutive nature of the socio-political pluralism, which politically raises the stakes for the ways that democracies respond to it. Although in different forms, all agonistic theorists see conflict as inherent to society and politics, and stress its productive function. In this sense, conflict is seen not only as an unavoidable fact of political life, but a strength of democratic culture and practice, which needs to be recognised and institutionalised in order to avoid the 'conflation' of democracy into other types (autocratic of technocratic) of political regimes. In this sense, it is important to highlight that Mouffe's work – the most notorious 'agonistic' approach, and the one we will mainly focus on here – is placed within a broader context of similar accounts on the conflictual and contestatory nature of politics, in which the agonistic perspective is seen as a channel for disagreement and a challenge for the hegemonic distribution of power[27].

[26] This means, for instance, that radical democracy is not equal to agonistic democracy as such, nor completely conflates with poststructuralist positions. Radical pluralism, agonism, and other forms of radical thinking are characterized, as much as the 'classical' liberal theory, for the plurality of interpretation and positions developed.

[27] For instance, James Tully places contestation at the heart of democratic politics and stresses the constructive role of dissent. However, he also highlights the importance of dialogical participation – what he calls practices of *civic freedom* (Tully, 2008) – in the process of democratic change. William Connolly, for his part, goes beyond the 'light' agonism of Tully, and speaks of 'agonistic respect' – rather than 'agonistic democracy' (Connolly, 1995) –, referring to the specific kind of civic disposition (a respectful one)

Within the wide spectrum of democratic theory, the recent work of Chantal Mouffe has been influential and has activated numerous theoretical debates. Mouffe undoubtedly represents a reference for all those who approach contemporary debates on democratic theory as well as on pluralism and contentious politics. Theoretically, her work critically engages with other relevant contemporary political theories – such as discursive and deliberative perspectives, sociological perspectives on modernity and pro-'third way' positions, as well as theories on 'exodus' (Hardt and Negri, 2004; 2012) – particularly drawing on (and somehow recuperating) other intellectual roots, such as Antonio Gramsci and Carl Schmitt.

In opposition to Rawls and Habermas's models of democracy, which – according to this perspective – overstress the rational deliberation and consensus, these theories insist on the presence and necessity of radical conflict in the concrete practice of democracy. Clearly, this does not mean that rational deliberation and consensus are impossible, but they are not the required conditions nor the necessary purpose of democracy (e.g. Connolly 1991; 1995; Mouffe, 2000). Agonistic perspectives, in this sense, envisage a model of democracy grounded in passionate competition and struggle among competing ideals, and values. Having said that, it is worthy to note that radical theorists also insist on the value of liberal democracy, and some of its basic principles. In fact, radical perspectives share an "adhesion to the ethical–political principles of liberal democracy: liberty and equality. But we disagree concerning the meaning and implementation of those principles, and such a disagreement is not one that could be solved through deliberation and rational discussion" (Mouffe, 2000: 245).

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that political actors have to adopt when expressing their constitutive differences and disagreements. In sum, these examples of conceptualisation of agonism, although they sketch different kinds of agonistic struggles, are certainly related in the emphasis they put on the centrality of conflict within democracy.

Beyond the critique of deliberative procedures, there is a deeper conceptualization of the relationship between conflict and democracy. In fact, while classic liberal pluralism sees conflict as to be contained within formal and institutional arrangements – mainly the check and balance system –, radical thinkers, and Mouffe *in primis*, conceive conflict as the core of social relationships and organizing structures, and as affecting the same interpretation of liberalism and democracy. Moreover, the relationship between liberal and democratic horizons is itself subject to contestation. This conflict, according to Mouffe, takes place within ongoing social and political conflicts themselves (2000: 2-5) – and not only within scholarly debate.

In the political theory of Chantal Mouffe, there are different assumptions that need to be taken into account. Firstly, according to this position democracy supposes the recognition of the constitutive pluralism and openness of society, which implies diversity and – as we have said – conflict, beyond (an even legitimate desire for) consensus. In this sense, the pluralism of values and beliefs – the different conceptions of the good, in deliberative terminology – is constitutive to democratic politics. However, whereas theorists working on deliberative democracy aim, at least partially, at finding a common basis for an harmonic conjunction of this plurality, Mouffe stresses that the *radical* difference within democratic context cannot (and should not only) be resolved through deliberative practices, nor appeals to common and public reason. In this sense, Mouffe *normatively* states that the constitutive pluralism and conflictual disagreements of a democratic context should not only be acknowledged, but also articulated agonistically. Any attempt to deny the conflictual essence of democracy is indeed an assault on its very essence: the focus on consensus, according to Mouffe, is not only conceptually erroneous, but also politically dangerous. The risk is either to fall into an *apolitical* dimension of politics or to generate the condition for the extreme, non-democratic, expression of conflict. An overrated desire for consensus, in fact, may not give conflict an appropriate democratic venue, thus pushing it

towards undemocratic routes.

Mouffe summarises this point through two dichotomies, on the one hand the *political* versus *politics*, on the other hand *antagonism* versus *agonism*. In fact, for Chantal Mouffe, the political is: "the dimension of antagonisms that I take to be constitutive of human society", while politics is the "set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political" (Mouffe, 2005a: 360). This is directly related to the second dichotomy, antagonism *versus* agonism.

> "while antagonism is a we/they relation in which the two sides are enemies who do not share any common ground, agonism is a we/they relation where the conflicting parties, although acknowledging that there is no rational solution to their conflict, nevertheless recognize the legitimacy of their opponents. They are 'adversaries' not enemies. This means that, while in conflict, they see themselves as belonging to the same political association, as sharing a common symbolic space within which the conflict takes place" (Mouffe, 2005a: 20)

Antagonism, somehow representing the political essence of pluralism, denotes the intrinsic, ontological dimension of the *political*. The democratic task is then to convert the we/they relationship from antagonistic to agonistic. Agonism, precisely because it differs from antagonism, becomes a clear democratic task. Moreover, agonism involves a confrontation between adversaries, not enemies, and encompasses therefore limited forms of struggle. This is what it would mean to think 'with Schmitt against Schmitt': Mouffe follows his critique of rationalist democratic theories, without embracing his rejection thereof.

> "Conflict, in order to be accepted as legitimate, needs to take a form that does not destroy the political association. This means that some form of common bond must exist between the parties in conflict, so that they will

> not treat their opponents as enemies to be eradicated, seeing their demands as illegitimate, which is exactly what happens with the antagonistic friend/enemy relations". (Mouffe, 2005a: 20)

It is this shared common 'democratic grammar' that makes struggles to be conducted in a peaceful – although often non-reconcilable – way. In this context, the function of democracy is to provide institutions that will allow conflict to take an agonistic form. While the intrinsic conflictual nature of the political – the radical pluralism – implies the need for agonism, agonism itself, in turn, sustains and safeguards democratic pluralism. Within this context, between this agonistic approach and the liberal deliberation there are differences both of in terms of style and purpose. For what concerns the aim of her agonistic perspective, Mouffe stresses that:

> "The fundamental difference between the "dialogical" and the "agonistic" perspectives is that the aim of the latter is a profound transformation of the existing power relations and the establishment of a new hegemony". (Mouffe, 2005a: 30)

Mouffe seeks indeed to theoretically put forward an alternative democratic model that can fight against liberal-conservative discourse, aiming to create a counter-hegemonic project within liberal-democratic theory and practice, and turn liberal democracy away from the conservative direction it is taking. The agonistic approach highlights assuming the 'dialogical' and 'consensual' principles within democracy in an un-critical manner fails to see the ideological level that lies beyond this assumption. In this sense, the agonistic project implies defending liberal democratic principles from their critics on the left and on the right, while challenging and providing alternatives to the conservative interpretations of the floating signifiers of liberal democracy – freedom, equality, public and private, and so forth.

For this purpose, Mouffe thinks that liberalism has to be deeply and

genealogically criticized. Within liberal and deliberative perspectives, Mouffe argues, politics is seen as a neutral terrain in which different groups compete to occupy the positions of power, whose objective is simply to dislodge others in order to occupy their place. Here there is no critical questioning of the dominant ideological hegemony, nor projects for the transformation of power inequalities. It is simply a competition among elites. The intrinsic presence of antagonism in the *political* is somewhat denied. Contrary to the liberal view, the agonistic perspective sees the antagonistic dimension of the *political* as always present: what is a stake is the struggle between opposing hegemonic projects that cannot be reconciled rationally, and one of them necessary dominate the other. Mouffe thinks of this agonistic perspective as a real confrontation, which is played out nonetheless under conditions regulated by democratic procedures accepted by the adversaries. The liberal and deliberative failure to see the inescapable presence of antagonism within the political realm has caused, according to Mouffe, the incapacity of traditional parties to provide forms of identifications around political alternatives[28]. Moreover, Mouffe moves against the liberal-deliberative vision, which is seen as a reduction politics to individual motivations. It has to be recognized instead, according to the Belgian author, that politics always consists in the creation of conflicting groups such as 'Us' versus a 'Them' and that it implies the creation of collective identities.

Within this context, Mouffe also moves another critique to the current mainstream of liberal-deliberative perspectives, which underlines their shortcomings in taking into account the power of collective forms of identification. In criticising the consensual perspective of democratic politics, she argues that any plausible account of politics needs to take stock of passions, understood as both the milestone of collective identifications and as motivational forces. Indeed, what endangers democracy for Mouffe is precisely

[28] For Mouffe this explains the success of right-wing populist parties in Europe, the only ones which attempt to mobilize passions and to create collective forms of identifications.

the excess of the mainstream rationalist approach, since it is blind to the nature of the *political* and rejects the central role that passions play in the field of politics.

Moreover, Mouffe asserts that the blindness to the affective dimension of politics and its role in creating and maintaining collective identifications inhibits liberal and deliberative democrats of acknowledging that reason cannot be seen as the unique motivational force for political participation. Passions, in this sense, have to be seen as the concrete forces that make people move politically, and they also characterize the encounter of political agents in the public field. Nevertheless, the acknowledgment of the role of passion does not mean that reason and reasoned argument do not have a role in Mouffe's conception of politics. Reason, in her account, is not the only mode of engaging legitimately in politics:

> "A well functioning democracy calls for a clash of legitimate democratic political positions. If this adversarial configuration is missing, passions cannot be given a democratic outlet and the agonistic dynamics of pluralism are hindered. The danger arises that the democratic confrontation will therefore be replaced by a confrontation between essentialist forms of identification or non-negotiable moral values". (Mouffe, 2005a: 30)

2.1 Passions and democracy

The idea that passions have to be recuperated in the consideration of politics is of importance in the work of Chantal Mouffe. She has often criticised rationalist thinkers – especially those who work in the wake of Rawls and Habermas – for their accounts of politics in which passions are considered either as something to be managed or suppressed, or are not considered at all. Not without grounds, one might criticise this position, claiming that Mouffe's

agonism is not as 'radical' as it purports to be, being instead a heterodox interest-group politics in post-structuralist clothing. However, Mouffe moves against deliberative-rational thinkers, whose vision of passions – she argues – is essentialist, to the extent they are seen in opposition to reason and as perpetual sources of political instability. We have seen, Mouffe is very critical of theories that conceive of politics in terms of rational consensus. Liberal and deliberative democrats are guilty, according to her, of assuming the perfect transparency of the subject, and of diminishing passions from their understanding of the *political*.

> "The domain of politics – even when fundamental issues like justice or basic principles are concerned – is not a neutral terrain that could be insulated from the pluralism of values and where rational, universal solutions could be formulated" (Mouffe, 2000: 92).

Against such views, Mouffe draws on Lacan and advances an understanding of the Self as lacking in essence, split, and as irreducible to a rational ego. The idea of the Self as perpetually seeking an identity in which to invest libidinally is a central theme that democratic politics cannot avoid (Mouffe, 1993: 75; Stavrakakis, 1999)

As we have already stated, Mouffe outlines an interesting theoretical perspective that allows seeing that passions are not only ineradicable from politics, rather they are also constitutive of it. Furthermore, emotions mark collective political identifications, which are important sources of motivation, as well as an essential part of political-hegemonic struggles. For these reasons, she emphasises that theorists of democracy cannot ignore the affective forces that make collective identifications, and fuel democratic politics. In fact, passionate attachment to collective identifications is what keeps individuals motivated and facilitates their political engagement. The affective bonds that tie groups together as well as group identities – and the distinction 'we' versus 'them' – is an essential dimension of politics, so that for Mouffe the social, as

much as the individual self, is split. Hence, the identity formation and group distinction are related to the role of the affective dimension, and plays a structuring function in politics, which means that it can never be done away with. Although for Mouffe emotions arise at the level of identity formation, passions are neither something personal nor something superfluous, as suggested by rationalist accounts of politics. Rather, passions are both intrinsic and necessary for politics. They ground democratic practice, and in so doing, they both define and drive democracy: passions capture the necessary bonds that develop among democratic citizenries.

What one should envisage, according to Mouffe, is a way of transforming the conflictual distinction between groups, from an antagonistic relationship – which can degenerate into violence and negate the very democratic principles – into an 'agonistic' relationship. Therefore, emotions in Mouffe's writings serve to shape democratic practice. Since conflict is libidinally charged – that is fuelled by passions –, one should reflect on the conditions under which the public sphere could flourish as a space where various hegemonic collective identifications are generated and contested. Understood as the way of identifying with the democratic – agonistic – grammar, passions infuse commitment to democracy, and carve out a way of practicing politics that dodges the excess of rationalism and proceduralism, according to Mouffe. Therefore, Mouffe sees the passionate agonistic and democratic practice as grounded in the same commitment to democracy, more than in rational justifications for democracy (Mouffe, 1993: 115, 140). However, Mouffe is aware of the fact that not all emotions have the same effect for democratic practice: some emotions move individuals to identify with democratic goals, while other may not. As much as the excess of rationalism, Mouffe thinks that emotions can also be blamed for undemocratic identifications. Nonetheless, attributing the problematic aspects of politics to passions is only one-sided and an incomplete vision.

Within this context, Mouffe is attentive to the both associative and dissociative effects of passions. Insisting on the necessary transformation of antagonism into agonism means for Mouffe that the dissociative effect of emotions has to be channelled into an agonistic-democratic path. The agonistic approach Mouffe contributes to outline does not seek to eliminate passions, since they are firstly impossible to eradicate, and secondly necessary for the same expression of truly democratic engagement. Thus, the mobilization of passions serves not just to consolidate the agonistic struggle, and the democratization of dissensus, but also the formation of counter-hegemonies. Therefore, for Mouffe, democracy is intrinsically related to passions. Democracy is the field of expression of them and, at the same time, is the result of their articulation. However, passions have to find the right democratic channels in order not to become democratically dangerous. Mouffe in fact stresses that, if democratic institutions are not able to supply venues for agonistic encounters, passions can erupt publicly in destructive ways. As well, there is the possibility that undemocratic parties somehow hijack citizens' passions and play them against democracy itself. For Mouffe, such is the case of the extreme right-wing parties: the absence of democratic alternative can push citizens to feel libidinally attracted to non-democratic collective identifications, such as the support to radical right-wing parties[29]. For these reasons Mouffe calls for a taming of passion: they have to be given the chance to be politically expressed, rather than eliminated, but expressly through the public expression of passion their potential dissociative effect can be moderated. The goal of the agonistic approach then is not to repress but to tame passions: they have to be agonistically expressed and thus suit the 'adversary' model of democracy.

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2.1.1. Taming passions

Given the unavoidable presence and importance of passions for politics, for

[29] Interestingly, Mouffe observes that most of the appeal of right-wing parties is related to their being parties in opposition: "they seem able to strive only when on opposition" (2005b: 70).

the agonistic model that Mouffe advances it is crucial to make emotions compatible with democratic values. The first task of democratic politics, then, is neither to eliminate passions nor to relegate them to the private sphere in order to establish a rational consensus in the public sphere. Rather, Mouffe insists on the taming of passions by mobilizing them for democratic ends and by creating collective forms of identification around democratic objectives.

An agonistic account of democratic politics does not conceive of citizens as being blindly driven by passions; rather the rational Self in an agonistic account goes hand in hand with the affective and intersubjective engagement. In turn, agonism implies that citizens adjust their affective commitments and make them compatible with the democratic ethos. The Belgian political theorist thinks that in the absence of proper venues for democratic expression, affects can threaten the very existence of the democratic association, as demonstrated firstly by the fact that the political spectrum has become hospitable to non-democratic parties. Therefore, it is imperative to rethink the role that democratic institutions can have in the process of channelling the intrinsic affective dimension of politics. The aim is not to erase passions from politics, but to 'tame' them and foster forms of identification that are conducive to democratic-agonistic practices, ensuring that conflicts will be played out agonistically – as opposed to antagonistically (Mouffe, 2005a: 149). Concretely, Mouffe develops the idea of institutional mechanisms through which passions can be expressed publicly, enabling (and at the same time requiring) commitment to democratic values:

> "Democracy requires a 'conflictual consensus': consensus on the ethico-political values of liberty and equality for all, dissent about their interpretation. A line should therefore be drawn between those who reject those values outright and those who, while accepting them, fight for competing interpretations". (Mouffe, 2005a: 120)

This means that for Mouffe the ethico-political values of liberty and equality

for all constitute the line that defines the passionate, yet respectful, encounters between political adversaries. In this sense, Mouffe's radical pluralism finds its limits in the acceptance of these political ideals: the implication of Mouffe's position is that passions related to identities in contrast with shared principles or passions that are expressed in inimical – rather than adversary – ways, do not have any possible place in democratic politics.

2.1.2 Passions, adversaries, and public fora

This position, as we have seen, directly links the support for an agonistic theory of politics with the affective dimension and the role of emotions in identification and mobilisation. In this context, Mouffe stresses that the harsh dichotomy between reason and emotion has to be overcome, and that passions and reason are intertwined. In her view, however, emotions have to 'fit' with the ethico-political principles of a democratic society, which means that political emotions can be considered as apt to democratic contexts to the extent that allow collective identifications that are compatible with an adversarial mode of politics. In other words, while passionate confrontations are the essence of the agonistic politics developed by Mouffe, not all emotions and not all ways of expressing them are conducive to the liberal-democratic principles, nor to agonistic practices: if emotions find political a development through undemocratic identities, agonistic politics degenerates into antagonism[30]. Therefore, the troubling side of passions is that they sometimes get attached to undemocratic identities, such as racism, xenophobia, and 'bad' nationalism, which can lead to non-democratic behaviour.

With the aim of avoiding this ever-menacing possibility, Mouffe normatively

[30] Mouffe for instance highlights that a conflation of the space between right and left-wing parties can push citizens to feel attracted by undemocratic groups and movements – such as extreme right-wing parties –, and will emotionally sympathize with political discourses that not only undermine agonism, but the very nature of democracy.

proposes that democratic institutions provide arenas for agonistic encounters, and consequently encourage a variety of meaningful sources of democratic identification. In so doing, she urges for institutional arenas in which agonistic politics can find place: Mouffe supports institutionalised *fora* as the appropriate spaces for agonistic encounters between passionately motivated citizens (Mouffe, 2000: 104). According to her, democratic institutions should create opportunities and *loci* where citizens can meet as adversaries, so that passionate political struggles can find a public outlet and therefore be politically constructive. In their absence, Mouffe maintains, emotions' dissociative effects could be dangerous for democratic purposes. In a similar vein, the dissociative effects of emotions are linked to what Mouffe calls the moralisation of political debates in contemporary democracies (2005a: 5): the ever-present tendencies of moralising public discourse, she argues, is dangerous as far as it mobilises aggressive passions and destroys the agonistic public sphere. More concretely, Mouffe thinks that depoliticizing democratic encounters and moralising them leads to a deterioration of democratic debates and their slide into inimical confrontations.

3. Criticism and strengths of agonism

Chantal Mouffe outlines an interesting theoretical position that takes on contemporary problems in democratic practice and theory and tries to make a contribution through her notion of agonism. Here we have briefly sketched her arguments, especially focusing on the central place of emotions within the ensemble of her work. Summing up, Mouffe's agonistic model of democracy emphasises permanent conflict rather than consensus, the primacy of power over morality, hegemony rather than consent, and the passionate struggle rather than reasoned consensus. At the same time her model seeks to 'defuse' or 'tame' antagonism (2005: 19-20), converting it into agonism, which involves respect for the freedom and equality and toleration for the

expression of differences. However, it is worth noting some critiques as well as the strengths of agonistic model for our research.

First of all, it has Mouffe's specific vision of the relationship between the field of politics and the emotional dimension has to be mentioned. As we have seen, Mouffe starts raising a robust critique of rationalism and liberal-deliberative models, and its tendency to underestimate the political role of emotions, especially so far as these are associated with collective identities. Mouffe moves away from a general critique of rationalism and a liberal vision of politics. Indeed she insists that rationalism is based on an idealised view of human sociability, which thinks of individuals "as being essentially moved by empathy and reciprocity" and sees "[v]iolence and hostility are seen as archaic phenomenon, to be eliminated, thanks to the progress of exchange and the establishment, through a social contract, of a transparent communication among rational participants" (2005a: 2-3) In this context, she argues that "the mistake of liberal rationalism is to ignore the affective dimension mobilised by collective identifications and to imagine that those supposedly archaic "passions" are bound to disappear with the advance of individualism and the progress of rationality' (2005a: 6). Is the objection that Mouffe raises to the liberal-deliberative approach truly founded? Surely, it can be stressed that liberalism – at least in its Kantian version – does appeal more to rational argument than to the emotional dimension, neglecting the role of the emotions as a constructive force in politics. As well, in the case of deliberative democracy, it is true that deliberation involves reasoning.

However, one might doubt that liberalism as such 'ignores' or 'eliminates' emotions[31]. As we have already mentioned in the previous chapters, different perspectives within liberal traditions have recently been developed with the aim of highlighting the central role of passions in politics, both for identity formation and the deliberative process. Regarding this aspect, for instance, it

[31] See, for instance, Cossarini and García Alonso (2015).

has been underlined that people engaged in deliberation may have strong feelings about the questions at issue, thus Mouffe's critique might seem exaggerated. Moreover, one can contend that the basic point of liberalism with respect to reason is the great value it attributes to the autonomy and perfectionability of people. Therefore it results clear that the concrete value on the merit depends on the general vision one has of politics itself. All in all, what Mouffe rightly points out is the fact that in certain forms of democratic liberalism, and especially in some theories envisaging at the deliberation consensus, there is a vision of politics as the progressive victory of reason at the expense of passions.

Criticising the deliberative model, Mouffe addresses the problem of democratic affective dimensions in terms of availability: passions have to find the institutional, agonistic channels in order to be democratically constructive. Here, another criticism becomes evident: it can be argued that Mouffe does not escape the same dichotomy of reason *versus* emotions she strongly criticises. While she criticises deliberative theorists for not taking into account the affective dimension of politics and suggests public *fora* as the agonistic-institutional channels for expressing it in a democratic manner, Mouffe seems nonetheless trapped in the dichotomy between reason and emotion. In fact, if she affirms that in the absence of institutional *fora* for agonistic politics, emotions cannot be democratically and publicly expressed, Mouffe risks reproducing the same understanding of affects that the liberal and deliberative perspectives (as she conceptualises them): passions hardly escape from being interpreted as passive, uncontrollable and in need of 'management'. In this sense, although Mouffe intensely criticise the ignorance of passions within contemporary liberal and deliberative theory, she does not adequately stress the fact that emotions are to be understood in a comprehensive manner, together with other human faculties. Moreover, one may rightly argue that the agonistic model does not adequately take into account the advancement in political theory made by those fields that have

centred on education, rhetoric and persuasion. In fact, it has been argued that an account of emotional education, which incorporates the possibility of responsibility for political expressions of affect (e.g. Hall, 2005; Nussbaum, 2001), would be compatible with democratic agonism, without marking a return to the perfectly transparent and rational Self of liberal discourse (Mihai, 2014: 43)

As we have outlined, Mouffe's account of passions inevitably suffers from the same modern 'Cartesian' dichotomy as the whole field of political studies. In this sense, the same idea of 'taming' passions has strong disciplinary connotations, which – one might argue – do not suit an agonistic account of democracy that conceives of citizens as agents engaged in collective processes of contestation. Similarly, if one insists on her idea of the democratic affective identification as only a matter of availability (of public institutions and *fora* for agonistic encounters), that might lead to the interpretation of citizens as non-responsible for their affective identifications. However, that would be only a part of the story. It is true that giving a great emphasis on the 'systemic' context could make it difficult to account for the individuals' responsibilities. Nonetheless, despite these criticisms, her perspective also offers some fruitful insights that allows our research, as far as it sheds light on the conflictual, passionate, and contingent nature of political struggles. Mouffe's agonistic model develops an account that allows us to read the current phenomena through a theoretical lens that put special emphasis on these central aspects of politics. Moreover, it directly resonates with a discourse theory of affects, a theory according to which passions are at least partially discursively articulated, and play a role in the process of framing reality.

Our main point is that, if one wants to go beyond the dichotomical thinking that opposes 'reason' to 'emotion, we need to conceive of 'passion' – as well as of 'reason' – as at least partially articulated discursively and as transformable through agonistic encounters. Mouffe's account is a good starting point in this

direction. In fact, following Mouffe in her plea to acknowledge the role affect plays in identification and in democratic practices, we are able to see the way emotions operate discursively through what we have called their geometrical and evocative role. We have already stressed that emotions take part in identity formation, which is an essential component of collective action. Mouffe' account develops this point and resonates with the action of anti-austerity protests and their formation of individual and collective identities. If building identities is one of the processes through which individuals and groups give meaning to their experiences and the political realm, it is important to bear in mind that this process implies the creation of a "we" as well as the identification of the "others". This is particularly important, as we have seen in the previous chapters, when it concerns the creation of the political subject – such as 'the people'.

Here we will sketch a connection between Mouffe's perspective on passions and the discursive account we have outlined of recent anti-austerity mobilizations. A perspective that mixes discourse analysis, populist theory and agonistic democracy – that is a critical engagement with agonistic theory – allows seeing the way in which emotions play a role in the attempt of filling the *empty signifiers* of popular sovereignty and democracy, an attempt represented by recent anti-austerity mobilization. In fact, emphasizing the role of emotions in anti-austerity protests can shed light to the contemporary vectors through which the struggle for popular and democratic legitimacy is currently led.

3.1 Indignation and agonistic democracy: injustice and action

Mouffe's agonistic model of democracy relies on a constructivist vision of reality, to the extent it strongly questions the idea of those who portray emotions as purely irrational forces; conversely she sees them as part of the

socially and discursively constructed political domain. It also echoes with the rejection of the naturalist thesis, according to which emotions are mere biological responses. Contrary to these interpretations, emotions are seen as a guide to social interaction and a motivational force: passions are central to our life plans, our intersubjective and political identifications, and hence the democratic engagement of individuals and groups. Charyl Hall rightly summarises this point:

> "In order to become politically involved, then, people must *care* about an issue, they must have some *vision* of how things ought to be done, and they must have *hope* that at least some progress can be made towards realizing this vision. But this caring, this vision and this hope are precisely the work of passion. It is passion that motivates people to engage with the world around them and try to make a difference in their lives" (Hall, 2005: 125-126)

Emotions play a crucial role in political identification, moving people in pursuit of their vision of the good. Hence emotions fulfil important functions – both morally 'positive' and 'negative' – in the re-production of individual and collective identity. What is more, we argue that Mouffe's account also resonates with the *injustice frame* formulated by Gamson (1992), and if taken together they provide a useful analytical tool to our research. In this vein, if one looks for instance at the indignation expressed by recent anti-austerity movements, one can see that people's desires and passions are directly linked to both the perception of the unjust situation, the formation of a collective identity, and the articulation of future political alternatives. Effectively, indignation can also be seen as the chief catalyst for political reform. In Arendt's words, who talks about rage rather than indignation:

> "Rage is by no means an automatic reaction to misery and suffering as such; no one reacts with rage to an incurable disease or to an earthquake, or for that matter, to social conditions that seem to be unchangeable. Only

> where there is reason to suspect that conditions could be changed and are not does rage arise. Only when our sense of injustice is offended do we react with rage, and this reaction by no means necessarily reflects personal injury, as is demonstrated by the whole history of revolution, where invariably members of the upper class touched off and then led the rebellions of the oppressed and downtrodden" (Arendt, 1969: 162)

Within this context, one can argue indeed that these kinds of passions are permanently related to the perception of injustice. Indignations, rage and similar emotions, framed in such a way, have characterized many movements in the modern world, which caused political changes and often generated inclusion of the marginalized[32]. As Martha Nussbaum (2004) has stressed, anger and similar emotions are important elements in ethics because there are things that are worthy of our indignations. Asking for the moral sentiments that are at the basis of a political-liberal society, she suggests that "anger and indignation will be such core sentiments because they react to harm or damage" (Nussbaum, 2004: 345). In this sense, it is reasonable to argue that the *passionate* engagement in the field of politics has often been linked to questions of justice[33].

Moreover, as we have already stressed, indignation represents an important form of collective identification: this essential phase for both individuals and groups is also based on cognitive and affective investments, and effectively traces the political targets and direction of political action. Mouffe is aware of this, and has placed special emphasis on the role of socially constructed

[32] One could read many political phenomena through this lens, and argue that – for instance – women were included in the liberal citizenship when they perceived their absence as injustice and *passionately* expressed their demand to be part of it. A similar judgment can be made for black people and the civil right movement, in which public indignation were expressed about political and racial discrimination. See Kingston and Ferry (2008).

[33] Interestingly enough, in the 8th book of his *Eudemian Ethics* Aristotle describes indignation as the noble emotion because it responds to a comprehensive notion of justice: we become indignant at injustice.

identities within the political domain. Concerning the role of indignation, she also stresses the fact that dissatisfaction with politics pushes individuals towards the extremes of the political spectrum, with both positive consequences and eventual risks, such as that passions latch onto political agendas inimical to democracy itself. Looking at the recent anti-austerity movements, Mouffe states that:

> "What is at stake is a profound dissatisfaction with the existing order. If so many people […] are now taking to the street, it is because they have lost faith in traditional parties and they feel that their voices cannot be heard through traditional political channels" (Mouffe, 2013: 119)

Now, although indignation clearly seems to correspond to the experience of an injustice, one might argue that it belongs to the register of morality, a field that Mouffe firmly separates from the domain of politics as such. In this sense, indignation might not at first sight be considered as relevant for democratic politics, and especially for Mouffe's account of agonistic democracy. Moralisation of politics is dangerous for Mouffe, in so far as it can lead to a transformation of agonistic adversaries into antagonistic enemies: demonizing the 'other' is not the right way of competing in a democratic context. Similarly, Mouffe distrusts indignation to the extent that it often leads to violence and endangers democratic fairness. Nonetheless, if one considers indignation as a civic reaction to a perceived *injustice* and think of it as oriented to the change of an unjust situation – always within the common democratic principles – then indignation can fit with Mouffe's democratic theory. Indignation, in this sense can further democratic goals by drawing attention to political injustices and democratic deficits. Mouffe writes about the events of 2011 that:

> "Understood as refusal of the post-political order, I suggest that current protests can be read as a call for a radicalisation of liberal democratic institutions, not for their rejection. What they demand are better, more inclusive forms of representation. To satisfy their desire for a "voice",

> existing representative institutions have to be transformed and new ones established, so as to create the conditions for an agonistic confrontation where the citizens would be offered real alternatives. Such a confrontation requires the emergence of a genuine left able to offer an alternative to the social liberal consensus dominant in centre-left parties" (Mouffe, 2013: 119-120)

This means that indignation can move citizens to challenge the state-of-affairs and propose alternative paths – concretely a radical left horizon that, in Mouffe vision, acknowledges the ways in which power works, and seeks to radically transform its institutions from within[34]. In Mouffe's account, the Spanish *Indignados* is an example of how political indignation sheds light on important democratic deficits and at the same time can agonistically challenge hegemonic interpretations of political values. Indignation then, within a broad series of political passions, also contributes to the alternative reading of the political values reinforcing democracy. Therefore, passionate responses to a situation perceived as unjust can lead individuals and groups to mobilizations: from framed emotions to action. As already mentioned, Mouffe stresses that institutions must give voice to the expression of passions within democratic *fora*, and especially for those who dissent from hegemonic political discourses. In this sense, while emotions fuel agonism, they should not conflate into a form of antagonism.

3.2 Emotions and political discourse: the *vacuum* and the never-ending struggle for democracy

In this context, one can argue that in Mouffe's view injustice generates indignation among citizens and allows political action. This leads us to

[34] Mouffe thinks that it is the duty of traditional parties to offer distinctive political programmes, rejecting 'the third way' – the post-political consensus – and providing an array of truly diverse political options that citizens could identify with and struggle for.

contend that, in Mouffe's account, the place and role for emotions cannot be seen just as a matter of fitting into democratic institutions. Agonistic democracy, as far as it is constructed around conflictual and passionate identifications and is intertwined with political action, resonates with the identity formation and the struggle for political alternatives. That is, the agonistic model of democracy is related to a conflictive and contingent struggle for democratic projects, hence echoes a specific process of filling (although contingently) the 'empty space' of democracy – what we have called the *vacuum* of politics. Therefore, if the common discourse of recent anti-austerity protest movements is based on antielitism, and the centrality of the people against those who are perceived as corrupting the original meaning of democracy, then this discourse is also a mobilization of certain passions that, firstly, allow the shift from the perception of an injustice to political action and, secondly, contributes to the formation of collective identities – and specifically to give meaning to the central category of 'the people'. In fact, political identifications are discursively linked with the mobilization of affective, and libidinal investments. Mouffe has highlighted this aspect, stressing that "the crucial role played in politics by what I have called 'passions': the affective dimension which is mobilized in the creation of political identities" (Mouffe, 2013: 137). Moreover, in order to read current democratic tendencies Mouffe also draws on psychoanalytical advancements:

> "To grasp what is at stake in a process of identification, it is absolutely necessary to take account of the insights provided by psychoanalysis. Freud, for instance, brought to the fore the crucial role played by affective libidinal bonds in processes of collective identification. […] A collective identity, a 'we', is the result of a passionate affective investment that creates a strong identification among the members of a community" (Mouffe, 2013: 47)

Now, being ruled by a mix of passions and reason, citizens – especially if feeling injustice – anchor their identification to collective memberships that,

as the populist analysis has shown, contribute to the division of the social field into separated and opposed camps. Opposed political camps that are also mobilised through the affective dimension of politics and discourse.

> "[N]o political party or movement that sets itself against the established hierarchies of power and wealth ever succeed unless it arouses the affiliative and combative passions of the people at the lower end of the hierarchies. […] Anger at injustice and the sense of solidarity are also among the passions aroused by any anti-hierarchical politics" (Walzer, 2002: 631)

If from a normative point of view, the issue is not to eliminate passions but to register their political effects and to promote democratic forms of identification, analytically the force of emotions lies in the same process of identification itself, which consists in the production of political meanings. As a result, agonistic democracy shows this productive role of emotions and, in this sense, resonates with recent anti-austerity mobilizations. Both agonistic theory and the concrete events – at least considered in their 'populist' facet – allow delving into the current struggle over the same meaning and legitimacy of democratic practice. What is more, they show the way in which political concepts are constantly involved in discursive-affective struggles for their own meanings. In the case of populism, for instance, the claim for 'the people' – the 'we' – is related to the discursive dispute over the definition of democracy. Thus, an agonistic model of democracy and the mobilization of passions within it goes hand in hand with the struggle for political alternatives, and the interpretation of political values. Emotions, in sum, are intrinsic to both the critique and the proposition of alternative political discourses.

4. Conclusion

Here we have dealt with the agonistic theory of democracy, and especially the formulation of Chantal Mouffe, specifically focusing on the central value given to the role of emotions. Alongside the key aspect of conflict, in Chantal Mouffe's account of politics passions acquire importance in so far as they inform human behaviour, the individual and collective forms of identification, and the struggle over the same conceptions political concepts and over concrete political alternatives.

We have especially linked concepts such as conflict, passion and agonism in order to show the way they can be useful for an understanding of both the political role of emotion within democratic context, and the same debate about populism and democracy. While from an analytical point of view, the agonistic model of democracy is not exempt from some criticism, as it is not immune from the dichotomy between reason and emotions, it nonetheless allows to draft a political conception of emotions that, if taken critically, opens up interesting horizons for both theoretical and empirical analysis. The argument developed here shows in fact that a critical engagement with the agonistic approach allows one not only to delve into the interplay between emotions and reason for democratic purposes, but consents particularly to make a further step towards another way of conceptualizing the function of emotions in the political field in such a manner that, while fostering the liberal and democratic form of society, discloses the contingent, discursive, and conflictual struggles over its own interpretation.

From a normative point of view, an agonistic model of democracy shows how an affective identification with the democratic ethos must underlie all political engagements. Critically assuming the opposition between reason and emotion – so that democratic politics does not imply submitting passions to reason –

agonism encourages cultivating a passion for democracy itself. Furthermore, Mouffe's account of agonism reads the struggle among adversaries – which agree on the basics of liberal democracy, yet disagree on their interpretations –, and therefore tallies well with recent anti-austerity mobilizations. Framing reality and operating in the populist'-democratic paradox, the mobilization of passion in recent mobilizations is part and parcel of today's struggle for democratic legitimacy and popular sovereignty. All in all, if one considers both the analytical and normative aspects of the agonistic account, it is also possible to acknowledge the useful contribution of Mouffe's perspective to the understanding of recent anti-austerity mobilizations.

> "Balancing (the need for) unity with (the need for) plurality; (the defence of) democracy with (the inescapability of) conflict; and (the mobilisation of) dissensus with (the construction of discourses and projects that encourage) democratic renewal, Mouffe's account of agonism sketches out the tasks of politics and, in so doing, it stirs interdisciplinary discussions over their contours" (Tambakaki, 2014: 1)

Chapter 8. Conclusion. Emotions, protests and populism: beyond the *threatening*/*corrective* dichotomy?

We began the dissertation by noting the peculiar relationship between emotions and politics, highlighting its relevance for both scholarly debate and concrete political phenomena. In this vein, if slogans shouted during recent anti-austerity movements, such as "listen to the people's wrath" represented the starting point for our research, this thesis has developed a series of theoretical arguments around this topic. Now, as we come to our conclusion, it is worth reflecting on the whole of these arguments.

The object of our research has been a critically engagement with a wide range of literature that has recently focused on the political role of emotions. We have specifically considered this question in debates around three main axes: protest and social movements, populism and democracy. Using the insights of this variegated literature, the several chapters of this dissertation have sought to assess the specific theoretical problems the recent anti-austerity mobilizations have uncovered, with particular emphasis on the place and role of emotions. For this purpose, throughout the thesis we have put particular emphasis on a series of political approaches that offer thought-provoking understandings of the relationship between the affective dimension and politics, and unveil normative and theoretical consequences for the political domain as such. We have stressed that many authors have started addressing

theoretical and normative questions about the role of emotions in protest events and, more broadly, in democratic regimes, putting special attention on states of feeling that mobilize, or demobilize citizenries.

In this vein, we have argued that, within the broad scientific literature, the role of emotions has particularly been assumed in the mobilization process and, on the other hand, through the dichotomy between suitable *versus* harmful democratic emotions. On the one hand, the affective dimension has been re-introduced into the explanation of collective action and social movements, specifically considering emotions in movements' emergence, organization, identity, framing, repertoires, etc. On the other hand, particularly by the hand of political theorists, emotions have been incorporated in normative questions about the nature of political regimes, questions of justice and democratic deliberation. Moreover, the general liberal perspective interprets this issue in terms of good and suitable *versus* bad and harmful emotions for democratic purposes, so that it differentiates between emotions that fit with democracy and those that are not beneficial to liberal and democratic values.

The perspective adopted in this investigation has tried to go beyond the pure normative perspective, highlighting the fascinating forms of analysis that a conjunction of different scientific fields can open up when dealing with the questions faced. Although it has been recognised the difficulty (perhaps the impossibility) to break free the modern dichotomy between reason and emotion – and similar instances –, the thesis shows that this same dichotomy informs a great deal of recent literature in the field of political studies and, for this same reason, constitutes a focal point of analysis. While within certain political science perspectives the dichotomy between reason and passions has either been reinforced or uncritically considered, recent developments in theoretical and cross-methodological perspectives, along with the same contentious phenomena we have considered as a case study, have suggested the angle from which to explore the role of emotions in our thesis.

Within this context, if the theoretical question that guides us in this study is related to the contribution of a focus on emotions in democratic theory, the main idea was to critically reflect on this role as uncovered by recent anti-austerity mobilizations. Specifically, from a theoretical point of view, this investigation has focused on the possibility of combining different fields of research. Studies in social and protest movements, and democratic and populist theory are then taken as part of a theoretical inquiry on the place and function of the affective dimension in politics. Indeed, we have argued that a combination of methodological perspectives – and concretely discourse analysis and democratic and populist theory – represents a fruitful way to comprehend the role of emotions in politics and, in turn, contributes to the enhancement of these perspectives. In fact, these perspectives and theories are not only lens through which to read the issue, but they also belong to the issue itself. In this sense, the general aim has been vindicating the cogency of some theoretical reflections, to the extent that they critically engage with the modern relationship between reason and emotions and, as well, can shed light on the recent anti-austerity movements we have taken into account as a case study. Moreover, focusing on these contentious phenomena and using the insights of these analytical perspectives, we have sought to explore the role emotions play in the process of framing the discursive struggle over the meaning of current political concepts such as democracy and popular sovereignty.

In this context, the hypotheses we have developed in the different chapters have allowed us to sustain certain assertions. (1) Emotions have a '*geometrical*' role in shaping political subjects, in so far as they actively contribute in the process of identity formation (for both individuals and groups). Moreover, this function in the formation of political identities, creation of basic democratic bounds, and consolidation of democratic beliefs is particularly evident if one addresses the issue at the discursive level. In this

sense, we think that emotions operate politically through a discursive construction capable of dividing the social into two camps, and giving birth to political identities. All this echoes with populist logic articulated by the Essex School, in which the division between 'the people' and the establishment acquires a central political value (Laclau, 2005a: 110).

Moreover, (2) we contend that emotions have an '*evocative*' role, contributing to the latency of political concepts. Emotional factors take part, through the ideological and symbolical function of the concepts they contribute to create, to the constant discursive struggle over political ideas. Referring to the case study we have focused on, we have argued that key political concepts such as 'the people' and 'democracy' are involved in the discursive-affective struggles.

Furthermore, we have stressed (3) that a discursive approach to emotions – such as the one outlined in this thesis – can contribute to the normative debate about the relationship between populism and democracy. Focusing on emotions (and inevitably in the dichotomy between reason and passion) allows observing the articulated ways in which the struggle for conceptual meaning is articulated, and therefore adds interesting nuances to the normative debate about the *threatening* or *corrective* nature of populism for democracy (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012a). In this sense, a discursive focus on emotions enhances democratic theory, insofar as it opens up a space for theoretical reflection that goes beyond the purely normative dichotomy between good and suitable *versus* bad and harmful emotional dispositions for democratic purposes, and incorporates other dimensions of analysis and necessarily involves an alternative normative theoretical perspectives.

All in all, through engagement with the scholarly debates on democracy and populism, the purpose has been to delve into theoretical reflections that are attentive to emotional dimensions. Accordingly, the idea has been to explore the role of emotions in the process of democratic legitimacy, drawing on the

case of the recent wave of anti-austerity movements, and their rhetoric for popular sovereignty.

This research has obviously faced different difficulties and found some critical points along the way. Without a doubt, the main critical question has been dealing with the profound theoretical nature of some ideas developed, and particularly the abstractness and fluidity of concepts related to the very notion of 'emotion' (and alike). If one assumes, nonetheless, that defining concepts is a contested and challenging task in political studies, then the wide and sweeping definitions that one might find in this thesis are not out of tune with the general activity of political thinking. Moreover, one of the aims of this thesis has been to show the articulated ways in which the emotional dimension plays a role in the framing of political reality. In this sense then, although it might seem to be a circular argument, the discursive act of *defining* the reality acquires a special significance for the puzzle of this thesis.

Similarly, merging the various theoretical and methodological perspectives has presented different difficulties. Nonetheless, the purpose has been to bridge the difference between theory and empirical evidence, as well as debates on democracy and debates on social movements, contributing to the dialogue between normative theories and discourse analysis. Linking contemporary political theories to the discursive level of current contentious phenomena is, in our opinion, a good way to answer the questions of this investigation and to make a scientific contribution.

The structure of the thesis itself resonates with the aim of our investigation that, in order to delve into the problems studied, mixes reflections on protest events with theoretical debates. The first part of this thesis (chapter two) is indeed dedicated to a critical literature review of different accounts on the place and function of passions and affect within the social and political realm. Although there seems to be no reason to highlight that emotions are

ubiquitous in individual and social life – just think of recent anger about the government rescue of financial institutions, the 'wrath of the people' –, the affective dimension has long had a complex and uneasy relationship with the political domain, and the political thinking. Indeed, we have – although briefly – shown the broad historical and theoretical implications that a focus on emotions involves: political thinking about the affective dimension is, at once, rooted in 'classical' philosophical disputes – the concern with emotions for social life is as old as philosophy itself –, and opens up relatively new and thought-provoking lines of research. Bearing this in mind, we have shown that many scholars have recently attempted to reinvigorate the study of emotions, highlighting its importance for the understanding of political phenomena.

In the following chapter (chapter three) we have dealt with the epistemological consequences that the literature on emotions and politics has brought to the forefront, and we have set our methodological proposal. As we have already suggested, we have argued that discourse analysis and theoretical inquiry about the link between populism and democracy have several interesting points of convergence, and therefore constitute the centre of the research. A conjunction of theoretical and discursive perspectives has allowed a better comprehension of this puzzle. In this sense, we have briefly taken into account the discourse approach and the perspective on populism developed by the so-called Essex School. Also drawing on this perspective, we have explored the place and function of the affective dimension in contentious phenomena and populism. It is through the populist logic, we have argued, that emotions operate what we have called their *geometrical* function. Populism, in other words, activate a politicization of passions.

In the following two chapters (chapter four and chapter five) we have turned to discourse analysis of recent anti-austerity mobilization, combining it with theoretical reflection on social movements. After having focused on the multiple scientific explanations of political mobilization, we drew on the

scientific approaches oriented to the analysis of the *symbolic* processes of collective action. We have argued in this sense that themes such identity and emotions resonate with the process of framing, that is the social construction of the political realm through the cognitive dynamics the same mobilization foster. On the one hand, we have stressed that the affective dimension, as much as other cultural, strategic, and ideological factors are necessary to the understanding of the current wave of mobilizations. In this vein, drawing on the *injustice frame* put foreword by Gamson (1992), we have highlighted the ways in which emotions are involved in political dynamics: they have – we have argued – a constructive role in the perception of the unjust situation, in framing collective identity, and in encouraging political action. The case of anti-austerity mobilizations is then taken as an example of the way in which the affective dimension is, first of all, present in political processes and, secondly, part of the concrete activity of collective action. Hence, two consequences of this perspective are worth noting: the first one is that, political movements are at once strategic and emotional, that is, they are concretely policy-oriented as well as public agents that contribute to the re-framing of political reality. Secondly, it has been argued for social mobilization and particularly for recent anti-austerity movements, that they uncover deep theoretical questions about the nature of politics and democracy. Theoretical questions that, we have stressed, resonate directly with the same affective dimension and the dichotomy between reason and emotions.

Consequently, the fifth chapter has been explicitly dedicated to these theoretical questions recent protest mobilizations have brought to the fore. Here the critique of representative politics, the experiences of participatory decision-making processes, and the idea of a different place for democracy, which can enable the political exercise of 'the people' – who is claimed to be the truly democratic subject – are the theoretical criticisms that protest and social movements uncover, and directly resonate with the discursive and emotional struggle for the meaning of the political realm. In this sense,

highlighting the discursive elements employed within the contentious phenomena, we have showed the emotional dynamics that properly interplay with the same definition of political ideas, such as 'the people' and 'democracy'. Therefore, we have shown that a perspective centred on the role of the affective dimension can also shed light to the peculiar and uneasy relationship between populism and democracy.

In fact, the last two chapters delve into this issue, and the normative debate about the place of affective dimension within democratic politics. Concretely, in the sixth chapter the uneasy relationship between populism and democracy is assessed by taking into account recent complementary perspectives that highlight the magnitude of such an issue. Taking on the inquiry of Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2012a; 2012b) about the *threatening* or *corrective* nature of populism for democracy, we have dealt with different theoretical positions on the matter. On the one hand, the intellectual tradition that sees populism as a threat to liberal democracy, to the extent that it damages some of its core values. Here recent readings of this relationship such as that of Urbinati (2014) is illuminating in the task of resuming the historical and theoretical issues one faces when dealing with a concept such as 'the people'.

On the other hand, we have highlighted different theoretical assessments (Laclau, 2005a) that are no less rigorous and analytically successful in maintaining that populism is, at the end of the day, an essential aspect of any political articulation. Moreover, drawing on the insights of this literature, we have focused on the 'paradoxes' of democracy, as well as on the location and function of 'the people'. This, it has been argued, resonate directly with our case study and the function of emotions in the political realm. All in all, our argument has showed that, while agreeing with the liberal position in underlying some inaccuracies of populist theory, this criticism does not discredit this latter theoretical perspective in giving an account of the role of emotions in politics – and the way in which they operate at a discursive level.

Although the different analyses we have outlined, such as those of Canovan, Urbinati, and Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, contribute to the task of clarifying the historical and theoretical roots of populism, they partly fail to grasp the profound connection between this theme and the affective dimension. As we have shown through our discursive analysis of recent anti-austerity mobilizations, which are seen as a form of populism, emotions have a specific function in democratic politics – a role that we have called both 'geometrical' and 'evocative' – and straightforwardly resonate with the struggle for popular sovereignty. In our view, this function does not find the right recognition in much of the recent literature in democratic theory.

In this context, we have then continued the research focusing on the agonistic approach in democratic theory recently developed by Chantal Mouffe. In the seventh chapter, in fact, we have drawn on her account of politics in order to show a productive way of conceptualising both the role of affects and the relationship between populism and democracy. Linking concepts such as conflict, passion and agonism, Mouffe develops a fruitful perspective that offers a critical horizon of analysis. Her normative contribution resonates with our discursive approach to emotions in contentious phenomena and, in this sense, allows seeing the way in which the affective dimension operates in the process of framing political reality – what we have specifically called the process of filling the *vacuum* of democracy. Now, despite the agonistic model of democracy not being immune, from an analytical point of view, from the dichotomy between reason and emotion, we have argued that Mouffe's perspective allows us to give comprehensive – yet not definitive – account of the puzzle we have been facing in this thesis.

All in all, if one has to accept – at least theoretically – the impossibility of going beyond the dichotomy between reason and emotion (as far as we keep these two different notions conceptually, we will operate through them),

nonetheless – at least normatively – one can act politically beyond this opposition.

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Annex*:* Introducción y conclusiones en lengua castellana

Capítulo 1. Protestas, emociones y democracia: presentación del problema

1. La ira del pueblo

El 2011 ha sido definido como el año de la indignación global. A raíz de la Primavera Árabe, fenómenos como los *Indignados* y *Occupy Wall Street* han caracterizado una ola mundial de movilizaciones que ha llevado consigo consecuencias políticas profundas. Plaza Syntagma de Atenas, la Puerta del Sol de Madrid, Zuccotti Park en Nueva York son algunos de los lugares símbolo de la protesta ciudadana y del cambio de la agenda política en muchos países. Como resultado de la crisis financiera mundial, estos movimientos de protesta surgieron – por primera vez en Europa y Estados Unidos, y en un segundo momento en escala global – como manifestaciones de crítica de los asuntos políticos y económicos, y como reivindicaciones de más participación ciudadana en el proceso de decisión política. A pesar de las diferencias y peculiaridades de cada una de estas protestas, el objetivo común de estos fenómenos era ser un vector de cambio político y social: careciendo de fe en los procesos y los actores políticos tradicionales, todos ellos exigieron más democracia (directa y participativa).

Es evidente que las protestas y los movimientos sociales no son un fenómeno nuevo, ya que han caracterizado los principales cambios en los sistemas

políticos contemporáneos, y sin duda seguirán siendo protagonistas en el futuro. Tampoco es un fenómeno novedoso la trasformación de movimientos sociales en partidos políticos institucionalizados. Sin embargo, la reciente ola de movilizaciones ha vuelto a despertar el interés científico para los movimientos sociales y de protesta. El surgimiento de las protestas anti-austeridad llamó la atención científica en los últimos años, y se ha producido una gran cantidad de literatura acerca de en estos fenómenos. De hecho, desde que la nueva ola de movilización alcanzó una dimensión global en 2011, académicos y activistas se han concentrado en sus demandas y sus implicaciones políticas. Los científicos sociales han analizado estos fenómenos, destacando sobre todo las amplias implicaciones políticas para las democracias contemporáneas (y otros tipos de regímenes políticos, en el caso de la Primavera Árabe), y la desafección hacia las instituciones políticas y el sistema financiero. Del mismo modo, han puesto el énfasis en los nuevos partidos políticos que han nacido en buena medida tras la experiencia de protesta de 2011, y que han comenzado a competir en las elecciones locales y generales, sobre todo en el sur de Europa.

Una mezcla heterogénea de enfoques y perspectivas desarrolladas en los últimos años tratan de responder a una serie de cuestiones planteadas por estos fenómenos contenciosos. En este contexto, algunas preguntas han captado la atención en el debate académico: cómo abordar los movimientos anti-austeridad? ¿Qué relación se da entre estos movimientos sociales y las nuevas tecnologías? ¿Deberían ser considerado como un fenómeno global, o como experiencias plurales y diferenciadas? Y en un plano más teórico, ¿qué tipo de visión política conllevan estos fenómenos de protesta? ¿Son eventos aislados y efímera o pertenecen a la onda mundial de protestas anti-capitalistas que, aunque con bases locales, tienden a la radicalización de la democracia? ¿Cuáles son las relaciones entre estos movimientos y los partidos políticos institucionalizados?

En este contexto, un sector concreto de las ciencias sociales – principalmente la sociología de los movimientos sociales, y el análisis de los eventos de protesta – ha producido una copiosa cantidad de literatura, centrándose sobre todo en temas como los recursos organizativos y las redes que estos movimientos emplean para movilizar a los ciudadanos, el tipo de movilizaciones, y la estructura interna de los movimientos (i.e. Benski, 2013; Jasper, 2011). Por otra parte, en consonancia con la difusión de la protesta, los académicos también han señalado, entre otras cosas, la importancia y el alcance de los discursos anti-austeridad, la lucha contra las desigualdades económicas y el precariado (Tejerina et al 2013;. De pie, 2011), las relaciones entre los movimientos y la teoría democrática (della Porta, 2009; 2013), el surgimiento de populismo de izquierdas en Europa (Stavrakakis y Katsambekis, 2014; Urbinati, 2014), y la crítica de la representación política (Tormey 2012; Prentoulis y Thomassen, 2013). Cabe señalar, en este sentido, el hecho de que los manifestantes que ocupan plazas y calles en las manifestaciones anti-austeridad no solo actúan contra el sistema financiero, ni solo critican la democracia representativa actual como profundamente corrupta, sino que también experimentan diferentes modelos de la democracia. De hecho, como se señalará en los capítulos siguientes, gran parte de los defensores de la democracia deliberativa encuentran en estos fenómenos un ejemplo concreto para aterrizar sus teorías en la realidad política (i.e. della Porta, 2009).

Estos son sólo algunos de los temas relacionados con la creciente literatura que se centra en las recientes movilizaciones. Sin embargo, el punto focal de esta investigación, aunque estrechamente relacionada con este tipo de preguntas, no se desarrolla desde el mismo ángulo. Más bien, esta investigación se ocupa de un aspecto paralelo que estos movimientos desvelan, es decir el papel de las emociones en política.

De manera análoga a la creciente literatura sobre las estructuras organizativas de los movimientos, y las preguntas 'tradicionales' acerca de los problemas democráticos – como la deliberación, la representación política y los esquemas institucionales – se ha prestado cada vez más atención a la dimensión emocional intrínseca a estos fenómenos. La relación entre emociones y política, cabe admitirlo, no es un tema novedoso. La política, de hecho, es inundada de emociones: entre otros sentimientos, miedo, ira, culpa, pena, envidia, vergüenza juegan un papel en la vida de cada ciudadano, así como operan en la formación de los movimientos sociales, en la estrategia de los partidos políticos, y en otros muchos procesos sociales. En este sentido, como subrayaremos también en los capítulos siguientes, la reflexión política sobre las emociones no es novedosa, y el papel político de las emociones evidentemente ahonda sus raíces en las tradiciones de pensamiento clásicas y modernas. Cabe destacar que, sin embargo, a pesar de ocupar un rol central en muchos procesos políticos y sociales, al parecer las emociones han vuelto solo recientemente a estar presentes en las investigaciones de las ciencias sociales, y de alguna manera es como si el estudio de la dimensión afectiva fuera abandonado por en la corriente dominante de la ciencia política durante décadas. Basándose en los diferentes enfoques y tradiciones de pensamiento crítico, el relativamente nuevo 'giro afectivo' en las ciencias sociales (i.e., Greco y Stenner, 2008; Clough y Halley, 2007; Clough, 2008) ha desarrollado una vasta literatura interdisciplinaria acerca de las emociones que abre interrogantes sugerentes sobre la relación entre las dimensiones afectiva y política. Las investigaciones han incluido, entre otros temas, preguntas sobre la relación entre razón y emoción, el lugar de las emociones en el proceso de juicio político, la deliberación, y el papel de las pasiones en el surgimiento y desarrollo de los movimientos de protesta y sociales. Por otra parte, mientras que los estudios recientes sobre las emociones sostienen su creciente centralidad en todo tipo de proceso político (i.e. Hall, 2005; Krause, 2008; Morrell, 2010; Kingston, 2011), cabe señalar que la atención ha aumentado recientemente de manera paralela al crecimiento de las movilizaciones anti-

austeridad, así como el éxito electoral de los partidos de extrema derecha en toda Europa (i.e. Perugorría y Tejerina, 2013; Wodak et al, 2013).

Poniendo el foco especialmente en los sentimiento que movilizan o que desmovilizan la ciudadanía, muchos autores han comenzado a abordar cuestiones teóricas y normativas sobre el papel de las emociones en los eventos de protesta y, más ampliamente, en los regímenes democráticos. En este contexto, las ciencias sociales se han centrado principalmente en el papel de las emociones en el proceso de movilización política y, por otro lado, en la dicotomía entre pasiones adecuadas y emociones dañinas para el desarrollo democrático. De hecho, por un lado, los académicos han hecho el esfuerzo de incluir las dinámicas emocionales en la explicación de la acción colectiva y los movimientos sociales, poniendo el énfasis en las emociones en el surgimiento, en la organización, la identidad, y los repertorios de acción de las movilizaciones (Jasper, 2011). Por otro lado, los teóricos políticos han explorado la cuestión normativa acerca de cuáles son las dimensiones afectivas adecuadas para los propósitos democráticos, frente a las pasiones perjudiciales. De manera general, estas preguntas se han centrado en qué tipo de compromiso emocional necesitan los regímenes liberales y democráticos: ¿qué disposiciones afectivas la democracia liberal requiere de la ciudadanía? ¿Cómo diferenciar las emociones que se ajustan con la democracia y las que no son beneficiosas para los valores liberales y democráticos? (i.e. Hall, 2005; Krause, 2008; Morrell, 2010).

"Escuchad la ira del pueblo". Este fue uno de los numerosos lema que los jóvenes en la Puerta del Sol de Madrid gritaron en la primavera de 2011 (Ramonet, 2011: 4). ¿Cómo se debe interpretar este lema? ¿Cuál es el papel de la ira – la ira del pueblo – en la política? Refiriéndose a la reciente ola de movilizaciones anti-austeridad, Zygmunt Bauman observa que el movimiento

de protesta conocido como los *Indignados* es una movilización 'emocional'[35], y añade que las emociones son especialmente adecuados para la parte destructiva, pero son inútiles para funciones constructivas. En una nota similar, Charles Taylor abre su prólogo a la obra de Rebecca Kingston y Leonard Ferry, *Bringing Passion Back in: the Emotions in Political Philosophy* (2008), con una declaración tajante: "La idea de que la democracia se ve amenazada por las pasiones es extraña, pero, en cierto sentido, es verdadera" (2008, vii). Es la ira del pueblo una amenaza para la democracia? Es ira la única emoción expresada por estos movimientos? ¿Qué podemos decir de las otras emociones expresadas por la reciente ola de movimientos anti-austeridad, como la indignación, el resentimiento, la humillación, el miedo, la esperanza, la alegría, y similares?

La cuestión normativa sobre el encaje entre las disposiciones emocionales y los principios democráticos tiene sin duda un valor teórico significativo y, recientemente, una cantidad notable de literatura científica se ha centrado en este tema. Más allá del supuesto valor 'hostil' de la ira para la democracia, lo que sin duda los movimientos de protesta nos iluminan es la necesidad de un análisis de la relación entre emociones y política. En este contexto, esta investigación gira alrededor de la disputa teórica y política sobre la función de las emociones en la política y, más concretamente, en la práctica democrática. Aunque algunos autores han demostrado que las emociones han sido borradas por la teoría política liberal contemporánea con el argumento de que representan un peligro para debate razonado (Hall, 2002; 2005; Mouffe, 2002), aún así, muchos autores contemporáneos que trabajan dentro de la teoría democrática reconocen que se requiere un compromiso emocional para una comunidad verdaderamente democrática (i.e. Ferry y Kingston, 2008: 14;

[35] Entrevista por Vicente Verdú, *El País*, 17 Octubre 2011. "Si la emoción es apta para destruir resulta especialmente inepta para construir nada […] La emoción es inestable e inapropiada para configurar nada coherente y duradero […] [El movimiento crece y crece pero] lo hace a través de la emoción, le falta pensamiento. Con emociones solo, sin pensamiento, no se llega a ninguna parte".

Kingston, 2011; Krause, 2008, Morrell, 2010). Además, el desarrollo de los acontecimientos de protesta en los últimos años, así como la aparición de nuevos actores políticos en toda Europa hace que se sumen problemas políticos a la relación entre emociones y política (y el estudio de la misma). Por lo tanto, si esta investigación nace de un rompecabezas general – ¿cuál es el papel de las emociones en la política democrática, y cómo tratarlo teórica y políticamente? –, varias preguntas concretas surgen del enfoque metodológico que consiste, como se desarrollará más adelante, en la vinculación de las cuestiones normativas acerca de las emociones con el análisis teórico y discursivo de la reciente ola de movilizaciones anti-austeridad que ha caracterizado el contexto Europeo particularmente desde 2011.

2. Objeto de estudio y preguntas de investigación

En este contexto, y con el objetivo de maximizar la claridad y la precisión en el análisis, es necesario detenerse en el objeto de estudio. Investigar el papel de las emociones en la política democrática implica especificar los límites de la propia investigación.

En primer lugar, cabe subrayar que a pesar de centrarse en los recientes movimientos anti-austeridad, esta tesis no es una investigación sobre los *Indignados*, o movimientos similares, como tal. Más bien, es una tesis que surge de estos fenómenos originados en el 2011 con el fin de explorar las implicaciones democráticas que conllevan. En concreto, el objeto de nuestra investigación será un examen crítico de la amplia literatura que se ha centrado en el papel político de las emociones. Además, vinculando el papel de las emociones en los debates académicos sobre democracia y populismo, el objetivo es reivindicar algunas reflexiones teóricas que pueden, a su vez, arrojar luz sobre los mismos fenómenos contenciosos. Por lo tanto, vamos a enfocar el estudio principalmente a través de consideraciones que

profundizan en la naturaleza de la relación entre las emociones y el ámbito político. En particular, se pondrá énfasis en una serie de enfoques políticos – de diferentes campos científicos, como los estudios de los movimientos sociales, la teoría democrática y el análisis sobre el populismo – que sugieren enfoques sugerentes para la comprensión de esta relación y abren consecuencias teórico-normativas interesante para el ámbito político.

En segundo lugar, cuando se trabaja con términos y perspectivas tan amplias – y se apela a conceptos tales como democracia, populismo, emociones – parece necesaria una operación de definición terminológica. Sin embargo, como se verá en los capítulos a seguir, las emociones intervienen directamente en la elaboración de la realidad política y en la propia definición conceptual. Eso quiere decir que la definición terminológica es lo que está a menudo en juego, como resultado de la interacción entre las dinámicas emocionales y el ámbito político. No obstante, cabe mencionar aquí algunos puntos de clarificación, aunque de manera preliminar. Como casi todas las categorías políticas, los conceptos de democracia y populismo son objeto de disputas, y hay un animado debate en curso en torno al significado de ambos. La teoría democrática es en este sentido la concreta manifestación de la lucha por definir lo que la democracia es y debería ser. Aunque un acuerdo mínimo parece ser alcanzado en torno a una combinación de soberanía popular y el gobierno de la mayoría – lo que implica la existencia de elecciones libres y justas, la protección de los derechos de las minorías, la igualdad ante la ley y el respeto de los derechos humanos básicos –, diferente enfoques, visiones y 'modelos' de la democracia han sido propuesto tanto por la ciencia política empírica como por la teoría política normativa. Asimismo, el término 'populismo' abarca muchas interpretaciones diferentes, y a pesar de los intentos científicos para llegar a una definición consensuada, los estudios políticos por el contrario han abierto el campo de los usos terminológicos, que van desde la demagogia, hasta un particular tipo de movimientos, o estilo político y discursivo (i.e. Mudde y Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Müller, 2011). En

los siguientes capítulos, que se dedican específicamente a estos problemas teóricos, se profundizará en el significado conceptual de estos términos.

En tercer lugar, cabe desarrollar una consideración acerca de las emociones en esta introducción. Aunque las emociones como tales no sean el objeto 'puro' de nuestra investigación, es cierto que ocupan un papel central en toda la argumentación de esta tesis, y serán por lo tanto un objeto de análisis en los capítulos siguientes. Lo que cuenta por ahora es poner de relieve que la ciencia política tiene una relación difícil con la presencia y las funciones de las emociones dentro del ámbito político – lo cual probablemente es debido a su propio desarrollo histórico como una ciencia social. Como ya hemos mencionado y explicaremos ulteriormente en el segundo capítulo, en los últimos años una amplia gama de disciplinas asumió la tarea de dar un nuevo protagonismo al papel de las emociones dentro de las ciencias sociales. La neurología, la psicología, la filosofía, la sociología y los estudios históricos, entre otros, contribuyeron a ampliar el interés por las dinámicas emocionales, de manera tal que también penetró los estudios políticos. No obstante durante mucho tiempo las emociones hayan ocupado un lugar marginal en la mayoría de las teorías científico-sociales, siendo considerada como algo personal, o confinadas en el ámbito irracional, recientemente un abanico heterogéneo de investigadores rompió esta tendencia (i.e. Damasio 1994; Elster 1999; Forgas, 2000;. Goodwin et al, 2001; Kingston, 2008; 2011; de Sousa, 1987). Esta literatura diversa ha desafiado la tradicional dicotomía entre razón y pasión, haciendo que se re-coloque la dimensión afectiva en el centro del campo social y político, con especial énfasis en lo que concierne a las movilizaciones políticas: las emociones están directamente relacionadas con los movimientos de protesta (Goodwin et al, 2001;. Goodwin y Jasper, 2003); se ha subrayado además que las emociones tienen un carácter social propio y un peso específico en la formación de identidades colectivas y de los vínculos sociales (Ahmed, 2004); así como desempeñan un papel en el juicio político y moral (Nussbaum, 1994).

Una literatura múltiple, ésta, que ha traído las emociones de nuevo en el centro de la discusión. Este es sin duda un mérito que hay que reconocer. Sin embargo, a pesar de esta investigación incesante, existen motivos de insatisfacción. En primer lugar, porque parece que los investigadores de los movimientos sociales y los teóricos de la democracia apenas intentan colmar sus diferencias (bien que esto es una tendencia general dentro de los diferentes paradigmas de las ciencias sociales). En segundo lugar, porque todavía parece haber preguntas inexploradas en la comprensión del papel político de las emociones. Una laguna que esta tesis intenta colmar.

En este sentido, es necesario mencionar algunos vacíos de esta literatura. En primer lugar, son pocos los autores que explícitamente tienden puentes entre las diferentes perspectivas teóricas y epistemológicas. Aunque muchos académicos ponen énfasis en las consecuencias epistemológicas de este 'giro afectivo', poco se ha hecho para conectar los diferentes puntos de vista con las consideraciones teóricas e históricas más amplias (i.e. Kingston y Ferry, 2008: 108-125, Krause, 2008; Salomón , 1990; 1993). Como hemos argumentado en otro lugar (Cossarini, 2014), una perspectiva de *longue durée* que mezcla historia del pensamiento político y debates contemporáneos puede arrojar luz sobre la relación entre emociones y razón, y con ello proporcionar instrumentos análisis para la comprensión de los fenómenos de movilización contemporáneos. Sin embargo, debido a la limitación de espacio y a los objetivos de esta investigación, el desarrollo de este punto se limitará al capítulo metodológico. De entrada, cabe señalar que la tradicional dicotomía entre razón y emoción sigue siendo profundamente penetrante, y probablemente representa una característica intrínseca de los estudios políticos contemporáneos.

El segundo punto que cabe destacar es que, dentro de la teoría política y democrática, la 'razón' – y sus términos correlativos, como racional, razonable,

y el 'mejor argumento' en la teoría deliberativa – ha tradicionalmente ocupado un lugar privilegiado. Con ello, no se quiere decir que el objetivo de la investigación es dar predominio de la dimensión emocional en el ámbito político. Más bien, significa que se ha demostrado que dentro de la teoría democrática, los estudios contemporáneos han puesto tradicionalmente énfasis en la razón, perpetuando (consciente o no) la dicotomía entre racional y emocional, y excluyendo (a menudo deliberativamente) gran parte de la dimensión afectiva del campo político (i.e. Holmes, 1995; Hall, 2005). Dentro de este contexto, los recientes fenómenos de protesta, junto con la evolución de las perspectivas teóricas y metodológicas, sugieren que es posible explorar el papel de las emociones desde una perspectiva diferente. En esta línea, la cuestión teórica que nos guía en la investigación es: ¿qué puede un enfoque en las emociones aportar a la teoría democrática? La naturaleza amplia y deslizante de esta pregunta, obviamente, implica otras cuestiones conexas que se deberán tener en cuenta en esta investigación. Estas preguntas incluyen interrogar la relación entre los factores racionales y emocionales en la epistemología de la investigación política, así como explorar el mismo significado de los términos controvertidos como 'emociones' y 'democracia', entre otros.

Además, es evidente que esta pregunta de investigación puede dar a luz a varios estudios, dependiendo de la perspectiva, los métodos y el objeto de investigación. Investigaciones teóricas, históricas o empíricas pueden enriquecer la comprensión de las emociones en el ámbito político, así como en el proceso de legitimación democrática. Sin embargo, nuestro nivel de análisis, como se detallará más adelante en esta introducción, se encuentra en la conexión entre la teoría democrática, los estudios de movimientos de protesta y el populismo. Esto implica que, con el fin de dar forma a nuestra investigación, es preciso centrarse en un caso de estudio.

Por otra parte, conectar las teorías aquí consideradas con un estudio de caso o,

más precisamente, asumir el caso de estudio como punto de partida, significa que sus límites deben ser detallados. En este sentido, se pondrá énfasis en la forma en que las emociones desarrollan un papel a nivel discursivo en los recientes acontecimientos anti austeridad, y en particular en el caso Español. No parece necesario subrayar que esta tesis no se centra en dar explicación histórica o sociológica alguna, ni busca un mecanismo causal de estos eventos. Las movilizaciones de protesta anti-austeridad son sólo parcialmente nuestros objetos de estudio, siendo sobre todo la realidad concreta donde poder aterrizar y comprobar algunas teorías políticas. Como se mostrará, a los efectos de esta investigación, centrarse en estos eventos tiene una ventaja científica doble: evidentemente se puede arrojar luz sobre los mismos fenómenos tenidos en cuenta, así como se puede sondear el contenido y las inconsistencias de la teoría política democrática que consideramos en esta investigación, y por lo tanto poner a prueba su fuerza para la comprensión de la realidad política existente. En este sentido, en él en el capítulo específico dedicado al análisis del discurso de la última ola de movilización y protestas en España se profundizará en ello, por lo que se da aquí una presentación de estos fenómenos sin demorar en detalles. En esta etapa se puede decir que la investigación se centrará principalmente en el nivel discursivo de estos fenómenos, poniendo especial énfasis en algunos lema clave que los manifestantes han estado empleando durante sus actos.

Una última especificación sobre el objeto de estudio tiene que ver con el enfoque metodológico, que será el centro de atención del párrafo siguiente. Es la misma naturaleza del objeto de la investigación que necesita una combinación de perspectivas, y un análisis multi-metodológico. A través de la conjunción de las investigaciones teóricas y discursivas – esta es nuestra creencia – el papel de las emociones en la política democrática puede ser ulteriormente analizado y comprendido.

Dado que el dilema al que nos enfrentamos es el lugar y el papel de las emociones en el ámbito político, y dado el caso de estudio que se tendrá en cuenta, se centrará este trabajo en una serie de preguntas específicas.

- Desde un punto de vista teórico, esta investigación se centra en la posibilidad de combinar diferentes campos de investigación, como el análisis de eventos de protesta y la teoría democrática y populista. En concreto, esta investigación se pregunta: ¿qué puede un enfoque discursivo acerca de las emociones aportar a las teorías de la democracia? Y a la inversa, en qué medida las teorías de la democracia deben de tener en cuenta el papel de las emociones?

- Empíricamente, la pregunta que queremos responder está en relación con el papel que las emociones tienen en el complejo proceso de elaboración de la esfera política. ¿Qué rol desempeñan en la elaboración de la realidad? ¿Cómo toman parte en la lucha discursiva sobre el significado de conceptos políticos y en el proceso de la legitimación democrática?

Es indudablemente cierto que una gran cantidad de investigaciones se ha centrado en el papel de las emociones en las movilizaciones sociales, en protestas, así como en la deliberación democrática y el agonismo político (i.e. Goodwin y Jasper, 2003; Krause, 2008; Kingston y Ferry, 2008; Mouffe , 2013). Uno podría argumentar en efecto, que el papel de las emociones ha sido analizado dentro de los movimientos sociales y, especialmente, como parte del proceso de movilización, vinculados a los recursos organizativos y a las redes. Además, podría afirmarse que, incluso en las teorías dominantes de justicia y de democracia deliberativa del siglo XX, hubo un reconocimiento del fundamento emocional de la política como, por ejemplo, el deseo intrínseco de la justicia como su propia base normativa (i.e. Banerjee y Bercuson, 2015).

Sin embargo, estas tradiciones científicas no han delineado sus investigaciones en la forma en la que estamos imaginando en esta tesis, y estas preguntas no se han explorado en mucha profundidad. Una laguna todavía existe en la combinación de estos estudios heterogéneos: la conexión entre, por una parte, las teorías de la democracia y el populismo y, por otro lado, el foco en las emociones que se dio con los estudios de los movimientos sociales, no ha recibido mucha atención entre los análisis académicos. En este sentido, este estudio intenta desarrollar una línea de investigación relativamente novedosa, contribuyendo a la combinación de estos enfoques y teorías de investigación.

3. Métodos e hipótesis

Como ya hemos mencionado, un corpus heterogéneo de literatura científica ha reciente rehabilitado el papel de las emociones en el debate político. Perspectivas y disciplinas diferentes, desde la psicología, los estudios epistemológicos, históricos, sociológicos y de teoría normativa han sido empleado por los académicos con el fin de abordar la función política de las dinámicas emocionales y afectivas. En esta investigación no se puede empezar adecuadamente el análisis sin antes reconocer los méritos de estas disciplinas. Sin embargo, cabe recordar que la perspectiva elegida para nuestra investigación, a pesar de ser multidisciplinar, está claramente definida dentro de un ámbito bien definido. Como ya se ha subrayado, el enfoque de este estudio se centra en los debates académicos propios de las teorías de la democracia y del populismo, con un particular énfasis en aquellas teorías que acentúan la dimensión afectivas de la política. El objetivo es profundizar en algunas reflexiones teóricas, reivindicando la eficacia y utilidad de éstas en arrojar luz sobre los mismos fenómenos de movilización considerados en esta investigación. En este sentido, esta tesis es una investigación de teoría política que, sin embargo, opera a través de un análisis discursivo. Metodológicamente, nos enfrentamos al problema de movernos entre

diferentes enfoques y ámbitos de estudio, con lo cual se emplearán diferentes perspectivas teóricas y epistemológicas. Asimismo, cabe precisar que esta investigación no gira alrededor de un solo eje analítico ni de un único corpus teórico. El objetivo no es simplemente resaltar los argumentos, inconsistencias, puntos críticos, etc., de una línea de pensamiento, de un autor o de una 'escuela'. Por el contrario, a partir de diferentes ámbitos de estudio se quiere abordar críticamente con un problema a la vez político y teórico. En este contexto, el objetivo es relacionar las reflexiones políticas con la realidad concreta de los fenómenos contemporáneos, vincular la teoría y la evidencia empírica, y los debates acerca de la democracia con los movimientos sociales. La intuición es que estas perspectivas tienen algo que aprender unas de las otras, y su vinculación permite desarrollar una línea de investigación original. En este sentido, mientras se examina la validez y el rigor de algunas reflexiones sobre el rol de las emociones en el ámbito democrático, a su vez se darán ulteriores herramientas teóricos para la comprensión de las recientes movilizaciones que se tienen en cuenta como caso de estudio.

TEORÍA → ESTUDIO DE CASO ←→ TEORÍA

Figura 1.1 Vinculación entre teoría y estudio de caso

Nos centraremos en detalle acerca de este enfoque metodológico en el capítulo que recoge las consideraciones epistemológicas; sin embargo, lo que sí es importante tener en cuenta es el alcance de la combinación de estas perspectivas. John Dryzek, Bonnie Honig y Anne Phillips, en su '*Introducción'* a *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory* (2006: 5) afirman que la teoría política se encuentra "en algún lugar entre los principios universales de la filosofía normativa y el mundo empírico de la política"[36]. Si estamos de acuerdo con esta declaración, entonces debemos reconocer que la conexión

[36] In the original English: "somewhere between the distanced universals of normative philosophy and the empirical world of politics".

entre la filosofía normativa y el mundo empírico se da mediante el lenguaje y los discursos. Como Juan Dryzek sugiere, "el discurso es una forma común de comprensión el mundo", que "permite a aquellos que lo emplean interpretar partes de información y con ellas contruir historias o relatos coherentes" (Dryzek 1997: 8)[37]. En otras palabras, es a través de discursos que la teoría política se desarrolla y puede comprender los fenómenos políticos, elaborar conceptos, y perpetuar ideas. Al mismo tiempo, como la tradición crítica del análisis de discurso ha demostrado (i.e. Laclau y Mouffe, 1985), las ideas y los conceptos son involucrados diariamente en luchas discursivas sobre el significado de la realidad. Cabe observar que, en este sentido, mientras que los objetos naturales, físicos y culturales claramente 'existen' independientemente de cualquier discurso particular, es también cierto que se 'construyen discursivamente', lo que significa que su significado se transforma constantemente a través de articulaciones discursivas concretas.

Dentro de este marco teórico, la investigación se centrará específicamente en el papel de las emociones en sus 'traducción' discursiva. Se hará hincapié de manera particular en la teoría de análisis de discurso, y se subrayarán algunos resultados aportados por los estudios de los movimientos sociales, es decir dos de los ámbitos de investigación que recientemente han desarrollado enfoques y métodos fascinantes para el análisis de las emociones en el horizonte político. También gracias a estos sectores científicos, como veremos en el capítulo dedicado a la propuesta epistemológica y metodológica, se han podido evidencias las dimensiones esenciales e intrínsecas que se atribuyen a las emociones. Estas son su dimensión *cognitiva* y *evaluativa*, así como su carácter asociado a la *sensibilidad* y al origen *motivacional* en el comportamiento humano. Teniendo en cuenta estas consideraciones, esta tesis sostiene que una combinación de análisis del discurso y de teoría democrática y populista representa un enfoque fructífero en el análisis y

[37] In the original English: "discourse is a shared way of apprehending the world", which "enables those who subscribe to it to interpret bits of information and put them together into coherent stories or accounts"

comprensión del papel de las emociones en política. Además, se explorará en qué puede contribuir un enfoque discursivo de la dimensión emocional a la teoría democrática en su conjunto. Con todo, este carácter multi-metodológico es uno de los elementos definitorios de esta investigación.

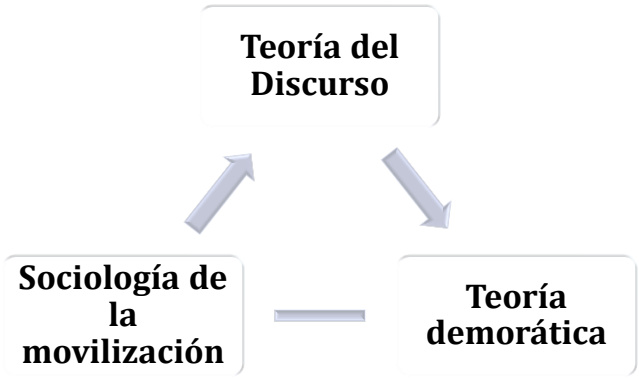

Figura 1.2 Vinculación entre los diferentes enfoques teóricos

Esta aproximación, yendo más allá de la perspectiva normativa pura – empleada generalmente por los aquellos que operan dentro del paradigma liberal – abre fascinantes formas de análisis que pueden complementar ambas investigaciones teóricas y empíricas. En nuestra opinión, esto debería aumentar el interés en esta investigación, conllevando, sin embargo, también algunas dificultades. En primer lugar, la ampliación de nuestras herramientas descriptivas y analíticas nos obliga a cumplir con las pautas de diferentes metodologías. En segundo lugar, emplear diferentes metodologías aumenta el riesgo de abrir el ámbito y el objeto de análisis de manera incontrolable.

Sin embargo, esta investigación se basará sobre todo en consideraciones teóricas sobre la naturaleza del populismo, su relación con la democracia y el análisis del discurso de los recientes movimientos anti-austeridad, con el fin de explorar algunas hipótesis generales. Por otra parte, nuestras hipótesis, como se verá más en detalle, derivan de una revisión crítica de la reciente literatura sobre las emociones y su relación con el ámbito político. Esta

literatura heterogénea, como veremos en los capítulos siguientes, indica, entre otras cosas, que: (1) los factores emocionales son esenciales tanto en la movilización colectiva, así como en la creación de vínculos sociales. Además, desde un punto de vista teórico y epistemológico, siguiendo algunos estudios recientes se puede sostener que (2) las dicotomías modernas basadas en la separación entre dimensión racional/ dimensión irracional, bien que muy generalizada en los estudios políticos, tiene que ser revisada.

Estas premisas nos permiten formular algunas hipótesis sobre la potencialidad de un enfoque discursivo de las la dimensión emocional para la teoría de la democracia y el populismo. En concreto, teniendo en cuenta el nivel discursivo de análisis, podemos articular algunas consideraciones sobre el papel de las emociones en el proceso de elaboración de la esfera política. En este sentido, se afirma que:

- Las emociones desempeñan un rol 'geométrico' en la formación de sujetos políticos. Desde un punto de vista puramente teórico, uno puede encontrar demostración de esta función en la propia historia del pensamiento político, siendo las emociones parte concreta de las teorías políticas – a menudo en contraposición a la 'razón' – y el propósito que éstas persiguen de crear un orden político legitimado (Holmes , 1995: 271). Esta tesis presupone la idea de que las emociones tienen un amplio y fundamental papel histórico y teórico en la construcción del orden político. Además se sostiene que tienen un papel en la actual lucha por el significado de las categorías políticas y, como consecuencia, los movimientos de protesta son parte de esta lucha. A nivel discursivo, la hipótesis es que las emociones operan en la formación de las identidades políticas, la creación de los límites democráticos básicos, y la consolidación de las creencias democráticas. En concreto, se argumenta que las emociones funcionan a través de una construcción discursiva capaz de dividir lo social en dos campos, y dar a

luz a identidades políticas. Como se muestra en la literatura sobre el populismo, esta lógica a menudo significa la división entre 'el pueblo' y la élite (Laclau, 2005a: 110).

- Por otra parte, se sostiene que las emociones tienen un papel 'evocador', que contribuye al carácter latente e ideacional de los conceptos políticos. Los factores emocionales participan, a través de la función simbólica de los conceptos que contribuyen a crear, a la transformación constante de las ideas políticas. Desde un punto de vista discursivo, las emociones operan en la lucha diaria por la definición de la realidad y de las categorías políticas centrales, como el sujeto político – 'el pueblo' - y por lo tanto de la misma idea de 'democracia'. Tales conceptos son públicamente disputados y se redefinen de manera continua – esto es lo que las recientes movilizaciones nos enseñan y reclaman, también a través de horizontes emocionales.
-

En este contexto, se hará hincapié en la medida en la que un enfoque discursivo de las emociones puede contribuir al debate normativo sobre la relación entre populismo y democracia.

- Por estas razones, la hipótesis es que un enfoque discursivo de las emociones refuerza la teoría democrática, en la medida en que abre un espacio para la reflexión teórica más allá de la dicotomía normativa entre las disposiciones emocionales adecuadas y aquellas que son al revés perjudiciales para el proyecto democrático. En este orden de ideas, un enfoque teórico y discursivo de las emociones también pueden contribuir al debate normativo sobre la relación entre democracia y populismo – a menudo formula a través de un enfoque dicotómico parecido. Con lo cual, centrarse en las emociones añade matices interesantes para el debate normativo sobre la naturaleza y el carácter del populismo con respecto a la democracia, ya que muestra

las formas articuladas en las que se produce la lucha por el significado conceptual.

En este sentido, resulta evidente la relevancia del caso de estudio – la reciente ola de movilizaciones anti-austeridad. En efecto, estas movilizaciones representan un ejemplo reciente del papel de las emociones en la política, sobre todo en su nivel discursivo y teórico. Además, siendo una expresión del fundamental papel de las emociones en política, nos permite entrever el papel de las herramientas emocionales en lo que concierne la creación de sujetos políticos y democráticos, así como su utilización en la lucha para el significado de algunas categorías políticas claves.

4. Objetivos y estructura de la investigación

Como ya hemos mencionado, si exploramos los debates académicos sobre democracia y populismo, es porque el propósito es profundizar en las reflexiones teóricas que están particularmente atentas a la dimensión emocional. En concreto, la idea es investigar el papel de las emociones en el proceso de legitimidad democrática, basándose en el caso de la reciente ola de movimientos anti-austeridad, y su los problemas relacionados con el concepto de soberanía popular. Al hacerlo, también vamos a revelar en qué medida un enfoque discursivo de las emociones puede contribuir a ampliar ciertos ámbitos relativos a la teoría democrática.

Para alcanzar este objetivo, cabe subrayar que el caso de estudio nos permite profundizar en consideraciones teóricas. En este sentido, se construye una investigación que opera en el cruce entre diferentes metodologías de investigación política. Aspectos teóricos y discursivos se entrelazan, de modo que se pueden juntar perspectivas diferentes con el objetivo de construir una narrativa completa sobre nuestro objeto de estudio, que es – como ya hemos

dicho – un problema teórico y político relevante. En otras palabras, si la intención de llevar a cabo un análisis exhaustivo del tema estudiado, el objetivo es explorar la función de las emociones en los procesos fluctuantes de la legitimidad democrática, así como reivindicar una particular perspectiva democrática. Para ello, se seguirá una estrategia cuádruple:

a) Se explorará cómo la teoría política y social ha tenido en cuenta el papel de las emociones y su relación con el ámbito político. A través de un análisis de la reciente literatura, se pondrá énfasis en sectores heterogéneos de la investigación política contemporánea acerca de la dimensión afectiva y emocional. Se destacarán los diferentes argumentos en el seno de esta literatura, y se pondrá especial acento en las consecuencias políticas asociadas a la teoría social.

b) Ahondaremos en la naturaleza de las investigaciones políticas relacionadas con las emociones, y en las consideraciones epistemológicas que ello conlleva. Además, se desarrollará una propuesta teórica y metodológica para este estudio, lo que nos permitirá vincular ámbitos de estudio heterogéneos y aparentemente separados, tales como el análisis político de las emociones y las teorías sobre populismo y democracia.

c) Nos centraremos en el caso de estudio – las recientes movilizaciones anti-austeridad y en particular en el caso español –, y a través de un análisis del discurso se identificará el papel de las emociones y las dimensiones afectivas.

d) Teniendo en cuenta el estudio epistemológico y el análisis del discurso, se profundizará en recientes teorías sobre populismo y democracia. Si el objetivo es reivindicar algunas reflexiones teóricas, sin

embargo, se vincularán las cuestiones normativas al enfoque discursivo desarrollado en los capítulos anteriores.

De acuerdo con todo ello, se procederá por diferentes etapas. La estructura de esta investigación, en efecto, está directamente vinculada con el objetivo metodológico, que apunta a la conexión entre teoría democrática normativa y análisis del discurso. Basándose en una literatura heterogénea sobre movimientos sociales, populismo, y teoría de la democracia, la investigación tiene como objetivo explorar una vía para la comprensión del papel político de la dimensión emocional, refiriéndose específicamente a las movilizaciones ciudadanas que han caracterizados los años de la reciente crisis financiera y económica.

Desde esta perspectiva, los capítulos que siguen están divididos en tres bloques principales: revisión de la literatura, metodología, y desarrollo de análisis teórico y discursivo. Más concretamente, el segundo capítulo (capítulo 2) se centra en un examen crítico de la relación entre emociones e investigación política. Después de detenernos brevemente en un análisis conceptual de las emociones y de la dimensión afectiva, se prestará especial atención a la relación entre emoción y razón en la investigación política moderna y contemporánea. Por otra parte, se pondrá énfasis en los argumentos desarrollados por la teoría social y política normativa contemporánea que ha profundizado en el role de las emociones en el ámbito político. El siguiente capítulo (Capítulo 3) pertenece al segundo bloque, es decir el núcleo metodológico y epistemológico de nuestra investigación. De hecho, abordaremos en primer lugar las consecuencias epistemológicas que la literatura sobre las emociones ha puesto en evidencia. Posteriormente, se propondrá una posición teórica que facilite la combinación de diferentes metodologías. Este marco teórico, caracterizado por una conjunción de perspectivas teóricas y discursivas, permitirá una mejor comprensión del objeto de estudio. Por otra parte, sobre al base del enfoque discursivo

desarrollado por la Escuela de Essex, se vinculará el nivel discursivo de las recientes movilizaciones anti-austeridad con el populismo y la teoría normativa. Con ello, se explorará el lugar de las emociones en la misma relación entre lógica populista y horizonte democrático. Es a través de la lógica populista, se argumenta, que las emociones operan lo que hemos llamado su función 'geométrica'. El populismo, es decir, activa una politización de las pasiones.

Los dos capítulos siguientes combinan el análisis del discurso con la reflexión teórica acerca de los movimientos sociales. El cuarto capítulo (Capítulo 4) se centra en las formas en que las ciencias sociales han considerado la acción colectiva, y su particular relación con la dicotomía entre la razón y emoción. Se abordan en primer lugar una revisión de los estudios sobre movimientos sociales y de protesta. Se prestará particular atención tanto al nivel explicativo de la acción colectiva y la movilización social, así como a las formas en que las que estas perspectivas sociales han ido incluyendo las emociones en la comprensión de los movimientos sociales. El siguiente capítulo (Capítulo 5) se centra en los elementos emocionales empleados discursivamente en los fenómeno de movilización que hemos mencionado. Subrayaremos las consecuencias políticas de ello, enseñando que la dinámica emocional interacciona directamente con la misma definición de ideas políticas que están en el centro de la lucha discursiva, tales como 'el pueblo' y 'democracia'. Finalmente, los dos últimos capítulos (Capítulo 6 y 7) vuelven a centrarse en cuestiones propiamente teórico-normativas acerca de la relación entre la política democrática y el papel de las emociones. Concretamente, el sexto capítulo está dedicado a la compleja relación entre populismo y democracia. Ahora bien, resulta evidente que la literatura sobre democracia y populismo es tan grande que cualquier intento de exhaustividad sería inútil. No obstante, se analizarán perspectivas recientes que ponen de relieve la naturaleza problemática del populismo con respecto a la democracia liberal; con ello el capítulo considera la profunda magnitud teórica e histórica de dicha relación,

e intenta aportar una contribución a través de un enfoque discursivo de las emociones. Por último, en el séptimo capítulo se analizan algunas teorías políticas normativas que recientemente han desarrollado un fuerte interés por el rol de las emociones en la política democrática, y se argumenta que un enfoque *agonistico* puede ser una perspectiva fructífera para el desarrollo de este debate.

5. Ventajas y limitaciones de la investigación

Al presentar las principales líneas de nuestra investigación, es importante dejar claro que hemos tenido que enfrentarnos a una serie de obstáculos. Creemos que es esencial referirse explícitamente a ellos, así como a las limitaciones intrínsecas de la investigación. De alguna manera, discutirlas abiertamente es una forma de abordar y circunscribir sus consecuencias.

La primera dificultad ha sido enfrentarse con la cuestión de las definiciones de los ejes conceptuales de esta investigación. Definir los conceptos políticos es, por razones evidentes, una de las tareas más difíciles y controvertidas a las que los científicos sociales se enfrentan. Por otra parte, debido a la misma naturaleza del objeto de investigación – que es, de alguna manera, mostrar el papel que las emociones juegan en la redefinición de las categorías políticas – resulta evidente el círculo vicioso al que esta investigación se puede enfrentar. Cualquier definición, por otra parte, siempre corre el riesgo de ser o bien demasiado general – y con ello perder poder explicativo – o bien demasiado especifica – y por lo tanto convertirse en inutilizable para la comprensión más general de los fenómenos sociales. El mismo razonamiento se puede aplicar a las hipótesis de investigación. Ahora bien, el desafío planteado por esta perspectiva resulta ser una motivación adicional para la reflexión teórica que se pretende llevar a cabo en esta investigación. Por otra parte, la combinación de diferentes perspectivas metodológicas ha sido otro inconveniente a la que

esta investigación tuvo que enfrentar. El carácter multidisciplinar y la combinación de perspectivas, obviamente, puede convertirse en una crítica sólida para la investigación en su conjunto, ya que se puede sumar la crítica de los diferentes enfoques empleados y, más importante aún, la crítica a cualquier investigación con estos rasgos metodológicos (para decirlo de manera simple: no sería ni un estudio de caso, ni una investigación puramente de teoría política).

A pesar de estos problemas y las posibles críticas relacionadas, es posible resaltar también los resultados y las ventajas que esta investigación presenta. El carácter amplio y abierto de la investigación no impide que se puedan evidenciar algunos ejes centrales: en las siguientes páginas se trata de desarrollar una línea metodológica para explorar el papel de las emociones, y en particular modo su dimensión discursiva, en la política democrática y la legitimidad política, teniendo en cuenta sobre todo las perspectivas teórico-normativas que recientemente han profundizado en ello. Aún siendo consciente de la inmensa cantidad de variables que intervienen en todo ello, nos centraremos principalmente en el nivel teórico y discursivo, a través del cual – esta es una de las tesis – es posible llevar a cabo una investigación fructífera. En otras palabras, cabe subrayar una vez más que el marco teórico de esta investigación constituye a nuestro parecer una contribución relevante para el fin del estudio mismo. La principal ventaja es precisamente que puede ayudar a ampliar la comprensión del papel de las emociones en el ámbito político, y contribuir a reivindicar determinadas teorías democráticas y, conjuntamente, el fenómeno del populismo.

Del mismo modo, la combinación de múltiples metodologías, lejos de ser un problema en sí mismo, puede enriquecer la comprensión de las movilizaciones que han tenido lugar recientemente a raíz de la crisis económico-financiera. La combinación de diferentes perspectivas, como la teoría política normativa, la literatura sobre populismo y sobre los movimientos de protesta es de hecho

un punto de fortaleza de esta investigación. Evidentemente, incluso un enfoque de este tipo encuentra sus dificultades en ir más allá del positivismo y el reduccionismo que caracteriza los estudios politológicos acerca de la dimensión emocional y afectiva. Sin embargo, con esta tesis se pretende dar un paso en esta dirección. El objetivo es tender un puente entre teoría normativa y estudios empíricos, entre las cuestiones de teoría de la democracia y los problemas relacionados con los movimientos sociales, e trazar un horizonte de análisis más allá de esta brecha – que sin duda constituye un obstáculo para el análisis del rol de las emociones en el ámbito político democrático. Con todo, se tratará de contribuir al diálogo entre teoría normativa y análisis del discurso, de manera que, vincular la teoría democrática contemporánea al nivel discursivo de las recientes movilizaciones, en nuestra opinión, es una buena manera para responder a las preguntas de esta investigación. Asimismo, la formulación abierta de la pregunta de investigación se inscribe por lo tanto en el intento de ir más allá del mero análisis de la dimensión afectiva y de las emociones en los movimientos sociales. En este sentido, esta investigación pretende contribuir a la exploración de lo que podemos llamar la 'legitimidad emocional' de la democracia, y no se centra solamente en el caso de los movimientos sociales, ni trata de caracterizar el role de las emociones como mecanismo causal de los fenómenos sociales de protesta.

Por último, la teoría que desarrollamos en esta tesis se apoya sin dudas sobre importantes precedentes teóricos, así como en nuestras propias contribuciones anteriores. No obstante, a través de la comprensión discursiva de la reciente movilización anti-austeridad, el estudio también tiene como objetivo delinear un horizonte teórico original. En particular, se apuntan a una línea de investigación que combina teoría democrática y análisis del discurso como horizonte teórico propio para la comprensión de la reciente ola de movilización. Además, a través de esta línea teórica se puede llegar comprender el rol de las emociones en su relación con la política democrática:

la lectura de las movilizaciones a través del foco las emociones en la política, ayuda en la lectura de los mecanismos de legitimidad popular y democrática contemporáneos. En efecto, las movilizaciones han claramente representado una crítica inmanente de las formas contemporáneas de poder económico y político, siendo el síntoma del declive de la legitimidad de las instituciones políticas y económicas. Por lo tanto, haciendo hincapié en el uso de vectores emocionales dentro de los movimientos anti-austeridad, se puede poner de relieve el papel fundamental de las emociones en política, sobre todo por lo que concierne la creación de sujetos políticos - y en particular la articulación política alrededor de concepto de 'pueblo' -, así como el proceso de legitimación política y la disputa por el significado de democracia.

Capítulo 8. Conclusiones: Emociones, protestas y populismo: más allá de la visión dicotómica?

Esta investigación comienza señalando la peculiar relación entre la dimensión emocional y la política, destacando su relevancia tanto para el debate académico como para los fenómenos políticos concretos. En este orden de ideas, si los lemas y eslóganes utilizados durante los recientes movimientos anti-austeridad, como 'escuchar a la ira del pueblo', representan el punto de partida de nuestra investigación, esta tesis ha desarrollado una serie de argumentos teóricos en torno a este tema. Ahora, al llegar a las conclusiones, cabe reflexionar sobre el conjunto de estos argumentos.

El objeto general de nuestra investigación ha sido abordar de manera crítica el amplio corpus de literatura que recientemente ha se centrado en el papel político de las emociones. Hemos considerado específicamente esta cuestión en los debates acerca tres ejes principales: los movimientos sociales y de protesta, el populismo y la democracia. Empleando las ideas y los argumentos de esta heterogénea literatura, en los varios capítulos de esta tesis se ha tratado de evaluar los problemas teóricos evidenciados por las recientes movilizaciones anti-austeridad, con especial énfasis en el lugar y el papel de las emociones. Para ello, a lo largo de la tesis hemos subrayado una serie de planteamientos políticos que ofrecen interesantes elementos de reflexión sobre la relación emociones/política, y al mismo tiempo desvelan las consecuencias normativas para el ámbito social y político en su conjunto. En la

investigación se ha destacado el hecho de que diferentes disciplinas y muchos autores han comenzado a abordar las cuestiones teórico-normativas sobre el papel de las emociones en los movimientos sociales, en los eventos de protesta y, más en general, en los regímenes democráticos, poniendo especial atención en las dimensiones afectivas y emocionales que movilizan la ciudadanía.

En este sentido, se ha evidenciado que, dentro de la amplia literatura científica, el papel de las emociones ha sido abordado y enfocado, por un lado, el proceso de movilización y, por otro lado, a través de la dicotomía emociones propias para el contexto democrático *versus* emociones dañinas. Es notorio que, por un lado, la dimensión afectiva ha sido reintroducida en la explicación de la acción colectiva y de los movimientos sociales, teniendo en cuenta su rol específicamente en el surgimiento, la organización, la identidad, y los repertorios de la movilización política. Por otro lado, sobre todo de la mano de los teóricos políticos, las emociones se han incorporado en las cuestiones normativas acerca de la naturaleza de los regímenes políticos, así como en las cuestiones de justicia y de deliberación democrática. Por lo general, la perspectiva liberal interpreta esta cuestión en términos de buenas emociones para los propósitos democráticos, frente a aquellas que se consideran perjudiciales. Eso hace que a menudo se diferencie entre las emociones que *tout court* se ajustan con la democracia y las que no son beneficiosas para los valores liberales y democráticos.

Teniendo en cuenta todo ello, la perspectiva adoptada en esta investigación ha tratado de ir más allá de una perspectiva puramente normativa, destacando los fascinantes horizontes de análisis que una conjunción de diferentes ámbitos científicos puede abrir. Aunque se ha reconocido la dificultad (tal vez la imposibilidad) de liberarse de la dicotomía moderna entre razón y emoción, la tesis muestra que esta misma dicotomía sustancia una gran parte de la literatura reciente en el campo de los estudios políticos y, por esta misma razón, constituye un punto central de análisis. Aunque en ciertos ámbitos de la

ciencia política la dicotomía entre razón y pasiones ha sido o bien reforzada o considerada acríticamente, la reciente evolución de perspectivas teóricas y metodológicas, junto con los mismos fenómenos de movilización que hemos considerado como caso de estudio, han sugerido el ángulo desde el que se ha ido explorando el papel de las emociones.

En este contexto, si la cuestión teórica que nos guía en este estudio se relaciona con la contribución de un enfoque en las emociones en la teoría democrática, la idea principal era hacer una reflexión crítica en este papel de descubierta por las recientes movilizaciones contra la austeridad. En concreto, desde el punto de vista teórico, esta investigación se ha centrado en la posibilidad de combinar diferentes campos de investigación. Los estudios en los movimientos sociales y de protesta, y la teoría democrática y populista Luego se toman como parte de una investigación teórica sobre el lugar y la función de la dimensión afectiva en la política. De hecho, se ha argumentado que una combinación de diferentes perspectivas metodológicas – concretamente, el discurso y la teoría democrática y populista – representa una vía fructífera para comprender el papel de las emociones en la política y, a su vez, contribuye a la mejora de cada una de estas perspectivas. De hecho, estas perspectivas y teorías no son solamente la lente a través del cual leer el objeto de análisis, sino que también pertenecen ellas mismas a la cuestión planteadas aquí en esta investigación. En este sentido, el objetivo general ha sido el de comprobar y reivindicar de la utilidad teórico-interpretativa de algunas reflexiones, en la medida en que abordan críticamente la relación entre razón y emociones y, además, pueden arrojar luz sobre los recientes movimientos anti-austeridad que se han tenido en cuenta como caso de estudio. Por otra parte, con el foco de análisis en estos fenómenos de movilización, se ha tratado de explorar el papel que juegan las emociones en el proceso de disputa discursiva sobre el significado de conceptos políticos tales como ‘democracia’ y ‘el pueblo’, y con ello la misma soberanía popular.

En este contexto, las hipótesis que hemos desarrollado en los diferentes capítulos nos han permitido mantener algunas afirmaciones. (1) Las emociones desempeñan un rol 'geométrico' en la formación de los sujetos políticos, en la medida en que contribuyen activamente en el proceso de formación de la identidad (tanto para los individuos, como para los grupos). Por otra parte, la función que tienen en la formación de las identidades políticas, en la creación de los límites democráticos básicos, y en la consolidación de las creencias democráticas es particularmente evidente si se aborda la cuestión a nivel discursivo. En este sentido, se ha argumentado que las emociones operan políticamente a través de una construcción discursiva que divide lo social en dos campos, y con ello contribuye a la creación de las identidades políticas. Todo esto en una línea similar a la lógica populista articulada por la Escuela de Essex, en el que la división entre 'el pueblo' y el *establishment* adquiere un valor político central (Laclau, 2005a: 110).

Por otra parte, (2) se ha argumentado que las emociones tienen un papel 'evocador', lo cual contribuye al carácter latente de los conceptos políticos. Más en detalle, los factores emocionales participan, a través de la función simbólica de los conceptos que contribuyen a crear, a la constante disputa discursiva acerca de las ideas políticas. Refiriéndose al caso de estudio, se ha podido sugerir que los conceptos políticos clave como 'el pueblo' y 'democracia' están involucrados en la esta misma disputa discursivo-afectiva.

Por otra parte, se ha subrayado (3) que un enfoque discursivo de las emociones – como el que se emplea en esta tesis – puede contribuir al debate normativo sobre la relación entre populismo y democracia. Centrarse en las emociones (e inevitablemente en la dicotomía entre razón y pasión) permite la observación de las complejas formas en las que se articula la lucha por el significado de la realidad política, y por lo tanto, añade matices interesantes al debate normativo sobre la naturaleza del populismo con respecto a la democracia (Mudde y Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012a). En este sentido, un enfoque

discursivo de las emociones refuerza la teoría democrática, en la medida en que abre un espacio de reflexión teórica que permite ir más allá de la dicotomía puramente normativa entre las disposiciones afectivas adecuada para la democracia y aquellas que son, por el contrario, perjudiciales. Todo ello, evidentemente, permite incorporar otras dimensiones de análisis, así como perspectivas teórico-normativas alternativas.

Con todo, a través de los debates académicos sobre democracia y populismo, el objetivo ha sido profundizar en las reflexiones teóricas que están atentos a las dimensiones emocionales. En consecuencia, la idea ha sido la de explorar el papel de las emociones en el proceso de la legitimidad democrática, basándose en el caso de la reciente ola de movimientos anti-austeridad, y su retórica de la soberanía popular.

Esta investigación obviamente se ha enfrentado a diferentes dificultades y encontró algunos puntos críticos a lo largo del camino. Sin duda, la principal cuestión crítica ha sido la de enfocar correctamente algunas de las ideas desarrolladas, y hacer frente en particular al carácter abstracto de los conceptos relacionados con la noción de 'emoción' (y similares). No obstante, si se admite que definir los conceptos político es una de las tareas más controvertidas, entonces las definiciones amplias y abiertas que se encuentran en esta tesis están en sintonía con un enfoque de teoría política. Por otra parte, uno de los objetivos de esta tesis ha sido la de mostrar las articuladas formas en el que la dimensión emocional juega un papel en la elaboración de la realidad política. En este sentido entonces, aunque pueda parecer un argumento circular, el acto discursivo de la definición de la realidad adquiere un significado especial para el problema general de esta tesis.

Del mismo modo, la fusión de las distintas perspectivas teóricas y metodológicas ha presentado diferentes dificultades. Sin embargo, el propósito ha sido el de reducir la diferencia entre teoría y evidencia empírica,

así como entre los debates sobre la democracia y enfoques sobre los movimientos sociales, contribuyendo a que las teorías normativas y análisis del discurso dialoguen. Vincular las teorías políticas contemporáneas al análisis discursivo de los fenómenos de movilización, en nuestra opinión, es una buena manera de responder a las preguntas de esta investigación y, con ello, poder hacer una contribución científica.

La misma estructura de la tesis refleja el objetivo de nuestra investigación que mezcla reflexiones sobre los acontecimientos de protesta con los debates teóricos. La primera parte de esta tesis (capítulo dos) se centra de hecho en la revisión de la literatura acerca del lugar y función de las pasiones en el ámbito social y político. A pesar de que no parezca haber ninguna razón para subrayar el omnipresente rol de las emociones en la vida individual y social – es suficiente pensar en la reciente ira causado por el rescate de las instituciones financieras por parte de los gobiernos, la 'ira del pueblo' –, la dimensión afectiva ha tenido durante mucho tiempo una compleja y difícil relación con el ámbito político, y también con el pensamiento político más en general. De hecho, hemos profundizado brevemente en las amplias implicaciones históricas y teóricas asociadas con un enfoque en las emociones: el pensamiento político acerca de la dimensión afectiva, a la vez, ahonda sus raíces en las disputas filosóficas 'clásicas' (la preocupación por las emociones en la vida social es tan antigua como la filosofía misma), y abre relativamente nuevas y estimulantes líneas de investigación. Teniendo en cuenta todo ello, se han subrayado en los varios capítulos los intentos por revitalizar el estudio de las emociones, y sobre todo su importancia para la comprensión de los fenómenos políticos contemporáneos.

El siguiente capítulo (capítulo tres) ha abordado las consecuencias epistemológicas que la literatura sobre emociones y política ha puesto en evidencia, y con ello se ha delineado el eje metodológico de la investigación. Como ya se ha sugerido, el argumento central es que análisis del discurso e

investigación teórica sobre la relación entre populismo y democracia tienen varios puntos de convergencia, y por lo tanto constituyen el centro de la investigación. Esta conjunción de perspectivas teóricas y discursivas permite una mejor articulación del problema que esta tesis aborda. En este sentido, se ha esbozado el enfoque sobre populismo desarrollado desarrollados por la Escuela de Essex, y también hemos explorado el lugar y la función de la dimensión afectiva tal y como esta perspectiva los ha ido enfocando. Se ha argumentado, de hecho, que es a través de la lógica populista que las emociones operan lo que hemos llamado su función 'geométrica'. El populismo, es decir, activa una politización de las pasiones.

En los siguientes dos capítulos (capítulo cuatro y el capítulo cinco) se ha desarrollado un análisis de las recientes movilizaciones anti-austeridad, combinando análisis de discurso con la reflexión teórica sobre la acción colectiva. Después de haber perfilado las múltiples explicaciones científicas de la movilización política, se han puesto de relieve sobre todo los enfoques científicos orientados al análisis de los procesos simbólicos de la acción colectiva. La idea central es que temas como identidad y emociones encajan con el proceso de *framing*, que resulta ser la construcción social de la esfera política a través de las dinámicas cognitivas que la misma movilización produce. Con ello, se ha hecho hincapié en que la dimensión afectiva, así como otros factores culturales, estratégicos e ideológicos, es necesaria para la comprensión de la actual ola de movilizaciones. En este orden de ideas, sobre la base del 'marco de injusticia' propuesto por Gamson (1992), se han subrayado las formas en que las emociones están involucradas en la dinámica política: tienen – se ha argumentado – un papel constructivo en la percepción de la situación de injusticia, en la formación de la identidad colectiva, y en el activación de la acción política. Así que el caso de las recientes movilizaciones anti-austeridad resulta ser un ejemplo de las formas en que la dimensión afectiva se manifiesta en los procesos políticos y en la acción colectiva. Teniendo en cuenta todo ello, dos consecuencias se merecen una mención

adicional: la primera es que, los movimientos políticos son a la vez estratégicos y emocionales, es decir, que están orientados al cambio de las políticas públicas, así como son actore públicos que contribuyen a la redefinición de la realidad política. En segundo lugar, se ha argumentado que la movilización social y en particular modo los recientes movimientos anti-austeridad desvelan profundas cuestiones teóricas sobre la naturaleza de la política y de la democracia. Cuestiones teóricas que están vinculadas esencialmente con la dimensión afectiva y la dicotomía entre razón y emociones.

Como consecuencia, el quinto capítulo se ha dedicado explícitamente a estas preguntas teóricas, puestas en primer plano por las recientes movilizaciones de protesta. Entre ellas, la crítica a la representación política, los procesos participativos de toma de decisiones, así como la idea de un lugar diferente para la democracia que pueda permitir el ejercicio político del 'pueblo' son las críticas teóricas que los movimientos sociales y de protesta dejan al descubierto. Estos puntos críticos, además, están vinculados con la disputa discursivo-emocional para el significado de la conceptualidad política. En este sentido, destacando los elementos discursivos empleados en de los acontecimiento de protesta, se han querido evidenciar las dinámicas emocionales que entran en juego con la misma definición de las ideas políticas, tales como 'el pueblo y 'democracia'. Con todo ello, se ha demostrado que una perspectiva centrada en la dimensión afectiva también puede arrojar luz sobre la relación peculiar y, a menudo incómoda, entre populismo y democracia.

De hecho, los dos últimos capítulos ahondan en este tema y el debate normativo sobre el lugar de la dimensión afectiva dentro de la política democrática. Concretamente, en el capítulo sexto aborda la difícil relación entre populismo y democracia teniendo en cuenta las recientes perspectivas que ponen de relieve la magnitud de tal cuestión. La idea ha sido considerar el problema planteado por Mudde y Rovira Kaltwasser (2012a; 2012b) sobre el

carácter amenazante o bien correctivo del populismo para la democracia, y con ello presentar diferentes posiciones teóricas sobre el asunto. Por un lado, la tradición intelectual que ve el populismo como una amenaza para la democracia liberal, en la medida en que sería dañino para algunos de sus valores fundamentales. Aquí algunas lecturas recientes de esta relación – como, por ejemplo, la de Urbinati (2014) – resulta ser iluminante en la medida en que compagina las cuestiones históricas y teóricas que se unen en el mismo concepto de 'pueblo' y todo lo que conlleva.

Por otra parte, se han puesto de manifiesto diferentes evaluaciones teóricas (Laclau, 2005a) que, no siendo menos rigurosos analíticamente, mantienen que el populismo sería, al fin y al cabo, un aspecto esencial para cualquier articulación político-democrática. Además, a partir de las ideas de esta literatura, nos hemos centrado en las 'paradojas' de la democracia, así como en la ubicación y la función del 'pueblo'. Esto, se ha argumentado, tiene una conexión directa con el caso de estudio y el rol de las emociones en el ámbito político. Con todo, el argumento ha sido que, a pesar de coincidir con la posición liberal en las críticas a ciertas falacias en la teoría populista, estas crítica no desacreditan esta última perspectiva teórica en su capacidad para dar cuenta del rol de las emociones en la política, y la forma en la que operan a nivel discursivo.

Aunque los diferentes análisis que hemos esbozado, como los de Canovan, Urbinati, y Mudde y Rovira Kaltwasser, contribuyen a la tarea de aclarar las raíces históricas y teóricas del populismo, fallan en parte en no trazar una conexión entre este tema y la dimensión afectivo-emocional. Como se ha demostrado a través del análisis discursivo de las recientes movilizaciones anti-austeridad – aquí entendidos como una forma de populismo – las emociones tienen una función específica en la política democrática – un papel que hemos llamado 'geométrica' y 'sugerente' – y están directamente relacionadas las disputas por la soberanía popular. Con todo, se ha apuntado

también que esta función no encuentra (salvo las excepciones que se explicitan en el capítulo septimo) el justo reconocimiento en gran parte de la reciente literatura en la teoría democrática.

En este contexto, en el último capítulo, se ha centrado la investigación en el enfoque agonístico desarrollado recientemente por Chantal Mouffe. De hecho, hemos esbozado su propuesta normativa con el fin de delinear un horizonte productivo en la conceptualización tanto del papel de las emociones, como de la relación entre populismo y democracia. Al vincular conceptos como el conflicto, las pasiones y el agonismo, Mouffe desarrolla una perspectiva fructífera que ofrece un horizonte crítico de análisis, que bien encaja en este estudio. Su contribución normativa se relaciona con nuestro enfoque discursivo de las emociones en las movilizaciones anti-austeridad y, en este sentido, permite entrever las dinámicas en las que la dimensión emocional opera en el proceso de elaboración de la realidad política – lo que en capítulos anteriores se ha descrito como un proceso que pretende colmar el *vacío* de la democracia. Ahora bien, a pesar de que el modelo agonístico de la democracia, desde un punto de vista analítico, no es inmune a la dicotomía entre razón y emoción, se ha no obstante argumentado que la perspectiva de Mouffe permite dar cuenta – aún de manera no definitiva – de muchas de las cuestiones que se han planteado en esta tesis.

Con todo lo que se puede concluir es que, si – al menos en el plan teórico – se tiene que aceptar la imposibilidad de ir más allá de la dicotomía entre razón y emoción (en la medida en que seguimos utilizando estas dos nociones, continuaremos a operar a través de ellas), sin embargo – desde un punto de vista normativo – se puede actuar políticamente más allá de esta oposición.